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THE INTIMATE LETTERS OF JOHN  
CLEVES SYMMES AND HIS  
FAMILY

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THE INTIMATE LETTERS  
*of*  
JOHN CLEVES SYMMES  
AND HIS FAMILY

1956

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HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF OHIO

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MRS. WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON  
(Anna Symmes)

From a daguerreotype in the possession of  
Mrs. William T. Buckner, Cincinnati

THE INTIMATE LETTERS OF  
**JOHN CLEVES SYMMES**  
AND HIS FAMILY

*including*

THOSE OF HIS DAUGHTER  
MRS. WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON

*Wife of the  
Ninth President of the United States*

Edited by

BEVERLEY W. BOND, JR.

CURATOR EMERITUS OF THE  
HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF OHIO

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1956

To his colleagues on the Board of Trustees  
of the Historical and Philosophical Society of  
Ohio through the years, the editor dedicates  
this volume in recognition of their loyal and  
efficient support.

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## PREFACE

In publishing the letters of John Cleves Symmes the editor has encountered many difficulties. A fire that burned down Judge Symmes' house in 1811, destroyed his papers as well. Fortunately much of his more important correspondence had been preserved elsewhere, and this scattered material made possible the publication of the *Correspondence of John Cleves Symmes*,<sup>1</sup> with its comprehensive view of the financial and political problems that arose in the founding of the Miami Purchase.

But the personal side of John Cleves Symmes remained virtually a closed book. Fortunately the family of his grandson, John Cleves Short, had accumulated a mass of correspondence and related miscellaneous papers, and these *Short Family Papers* the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress acquired in 1944. St. George L. Sioussat, then Director of the Division, called attention to their historical value for the early development of one of the most important settlements in the Ohio country, as well as for an insight into the personality of John Cleves Symmes, the founder. After Elizabeth G. McPherson of the Division of Manuscripts had completed an elaborate calendar she pointed out the intrinsic literary merit, as well as the historical value of these personal letters of John Cleves Symmes. Also she called especial attention to a number of letters from Judge Symmes' younger daughter, Anna, who married General William Henry Harrison. So far there has been little personal material available with regard to the wife of the ninth president of the United States for, like her father, Mrs. Harrison lost her personal papers when her home at North Bend was burned down about 1855. From the *Short Family Papers*, supplemented by other sources, it has been possible to secure a fairly satisfactory

<sup>1</sup>*Correspondence of John Cleves Symmes*, B. W. Bond, Jr., editor. New York, 1926. See Portrait of John Cleves Symmes, Frontispiece, *Ibid*.

## PREFACE

insight into her personality. And it has seemed eminently fitting to publish these letters of so prominent a figure in the early days of the Old Northwest, together with those of her father and her family connection, as an important feature of the one-hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio.

With the Short Family Papers as a nucleus, the editor has unearthed much additional material for this volume of personal papers. And in this somewhat laborious task he has received ready cooperation from the officials of a number of historical libraries and their staffs. Specifically, the invaluable aid given by Saint George L. Sioussat and Elizabeth G. McPherson of the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress has already been mentioned. Others who have so generously given of their time and interest include: James H. Rodabaugh, Head of the Division of History and Science, and Elizabeth C. Biggert, Documents Librarian of the Ohio Historical Society; Caroline Dunn, Librarian of the William Henry Smith Memorial Library of the Indiana Historical Society, has been especially helpful in calling attention to important material with regard to Mrs. William Henry Harrison. In the Filson Club, Ludie J. Kinkead, Curator, and Mabel C. Weeks, Archivist, have suggested important sources of additional material, and Forest H. Sweet of Battle Creek, Michigan, has discovered a number of important letters.

Especially is the editor indebted for their ready cooperation to: Leslie E. Bliss, Librarian of the Henry F. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, James W. Patton, Director of the Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina, and Alexander J. Wall, Jr., Director of the New Jersey Historical Society. Two members of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, Roy G. Fitzgerald of Dayton, and Sam D. Rich of Cincinnati, have permitted the use of important letters from their private collections. Altogether, this extensive list of those who have aided in the assembling of these letters is a striking example of the opportunities which the notable development of American historical collections has opened to the historian.



## PREFACE

The bulk of the material in this volume comes of course from the Short Family Papers, and it has been so designated. Of the items from other collections, those from the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio have been classified as *H.P.S.O. Mss.*, those from the Ohio Historical Society as *O.H.S. Mss.*, and the origin of the remainder has been indicated in each case. In all of these letters many names of persons and places occur. Where it has seemed necessary and feasible the editor has given explanatory footnotes. But his aim has not been to furnish a genealogical and geographic record, but rather to give a picture of the personality of Judge Symmes and his family and friends against a background of daily life in one of the most important early settlements in the Ohio country. In similar fashion he has made use of an extensive Index to take the place of many non-essential cross-references.

Lastly, the editor wishes to express his indebtedness to the staff of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio; notably, the Director, Virginius C. Hall, the Librarian, Alice P. Hook, and the Assistant Librarian, Lillian C. Wuest. Also, the editor acknowledges the generous, and continued support of the Board of Trustees of the Historical and Philosophical Society, and especially the encouragement and suggestions of the late Robert Lounsbury Black.

B. W. B., JR.



## CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION, JOHN CLEVES SYMMES, GENTLEMAN PIONEER.....	xv
 PART I, LETTERS FROM JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO HIS GRANDSONS.....	 1
To Charles Wilkins Short, Cincinnati, June 2, 1803.....	1
To Charles Wilkins Short, Cincinnati, January 22, 1804 .	4
To John Cleves Short, [Cincinnati, January, 1804].....	5
To John Cleves Short and Charles Wilkins Short, Cincin- nati, February 26, 1804.....	7
To John Cleves Short and Charles Wilkins Short, Cincin- nati, March 12, 1804.....	8
To Peyton Short Symmes, [Cincinnati, March 12, 1804]....	10
To John Cleves Short and Charles Wilkins Short, Cincin- nati, April 1, 1804.....	11
To John Cleves Short and Charles Wilkins Short, Cincin- nati, May 9, 1804.....	12
To John Cleves Short, Cincinnati, June 5, 1804.....	14
To John Cleves Short and Charles Wilkins Short, Cincin- nati, August 5, 1804.....	15
To John Cleves Short, Cincinnati, October 21, 1804.....	16
To John Cleves Short, Cincinnati, December 28, 1804....	18
To John Cleves Short, Peyton Short Symmes and Charles Wilkins Short, [Cincinnati, 1805].....	19
To John Cleves Short, Cincinnati, March 25, 1805.....	20
To John Cleves Short, Cincinnati, January 1, 1806.....	21
To John Cleves Short, Cincinnati, August 15, 1806.....	22
To John Cleves Short, Cleves, August 3, 1807.....	24
To John Cleves Short, Cleves, May 21, 1808.....	26
To Charles Wilkins Short, Cincinnati, August 9, 1808....	27
To Charles Wilkins Short, Cincinnati, February 22, 1809...	28



# CONTENTS

	Page
To Charles Wilkins Short, Cleves, March 8, 1809 . . . . .	29
To Charles Wilkins Short, Cleves, November 7, 1809 . . . . .	33
To Charles Wilkins Short, Cleves, February 23, 1810 . . . . .	35
To Charles Wilkins Short, Cincinnati, April 9, 1810 . . . . .	38
To Colonel James Henry, Cincinnati, April 12, 1810 . . . . .	40
To Charles Wilkins Short, Cincinnati, April 15, 1810 . . . . .	41
To Charles Wilkins Short, Cleves, July 3, 1810 . . . . .	42
To John Cleves Short, Cincinnati, December 14, 1810 . . . . .	44
To Charles Wilkins Short, Cleves, December 20, 1810 . . . . .	46
John Cleves Short to John Cleves Symmes, Lexington, January 14, 1812 . . . . .	47
PART II, LETTERS FROM JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO PEYTON SHORT AND MARIA SHORT . . . . .	50
To Peyton Short, Reading, Penn., October 18, 1793 . . . . .	50
To Mr. and Mrs. Peyton Short, Philadelphia, April 28, 1797 . . . . .	52
To Peyton Short, Philadelphia, August 10, 1797 . . . . .	53
To Peyton Short, Cincinnati, April 22, 1798 . . . . .	54
To Mr. and Mrs. Peyton Short, Cleves, December 26, 1799 . . . . .	55
To Peyton Short, Cleves, March 17, 1800 . . . . .	58
[To Peyton Short, Cleves, 1800?] . . . . .	62
To Peyton Short, Cincinnati, May 12, 1803 . . . . .	64
To Peyton Short, Cincinnati, April 8, 1804 . . . . .	65
To Peyton Short, Cincinnati, February 6, 1805 . . . . .	66
John Dimon to [John Cleves Symmes], Flatbrook, Jan- uary 21, 1805 . . . . .	67
John Cleves Symmes to Peyton Short, Cincinnati, Febru- ary 28, 1805 . . . . .	69
To Peyton Short, Cincinnati, July 22, 1805 . . . . .	70
To Peyton Short, Cincinnati, April 14, 1807 . . . . .	71
PART III, LETTERS RELATING TO MRS. SUSAN (SUSANNA) SYMMES . . . . .	73

# CONTENTS

	Page
Susan Symmes to John Cleves Symmes, North Bend, July 28, 1795 .....	73
John Cleves Symmes to Robert Morris, Cincinnati, August 22, 1795 .....	74
John Cleves Symmes to Robert Morris, Cincinnati, De- cember 22, 1795 .....	77
John Cleves Symmes to Robert Morris, North Bend, Feb- ruary 28, 1796 .....	79
John Cleves Symmes to Robert Morris, North Bend, March 2, 1796 .....	80
Susan Symmes to Robert Morris, North Bend, March 4, 1796 .....	83
John Cleves Symmes to Robert Morris, [North Bend], April 6, 1796: (Enclosures), Susan Livingston Symmes to John Cleves Symmes, Baltimore, February 10, 1794; Same to Same, January 30, 1794 .....	85
[Mrs.] S. Symmes to Charles Wilkins Short, Albany, N. Y., May 17, 1815 .....	88
PART IV, CHIEFLY CORRESPONDENCE, JOHN CLEVES SYMMES AND ROBERT MORRIS.....	
John Cleves Symmes to Robert Morris, Southold, [Long Island], June 2, 1769 .....	91
John Cleves Symmes to Robert Morris, Springfield, [N.J.], March 10, 1778 .....	91
John Cleves Symmes to Robert Morris, November 11, 1782	92
Catalogue of Books among Judge Symmes' Papers, 1783..	93
John Cleves Symmes to Robert Morris, Marietta, March 15, 1795 .....	95
[Robert Morris to John Cleves Symmes], Philadelphia, June 9, 1795 .....	96
John Cleves Symmes to Robert Morris, June 22, 1795 .....	97
Daniel Symmes to Robert Morris, October 30, 1795 .....	99
John Cleves Symmes to Robert Morris, Woodford County, Kentucky, November 4, 1795 .....	100



# CONTENTS

	Page
John Cleves Symmes to Robert Morris, Philadelphia, December 16, 1795.....	101
John Cleves Symmes to Silas Condict, North Bend, Feb- ruary 28, 1796.....	102
Robert Morris to James Boggs, New Brunswick, May 17, 1796.....	103
Robert Morris to John Cleves Symmes, New Brunswick, January 3, 1797.....	104
 PART V, MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS	 106
John Cleves Symmes to George Washington, Morristown, April 17, 1780.....	106
John Cleves Symmes to [Richard Clough Anderson], near Danville, June 21, 1787.....	107
John Cleves Symmes to [Richard Clough Anderson], Lex- ington, June 27, 1787.....	108
John Cleves Symmes and George Turner to Winthrop Sargent, Vincennes, July 10, 1790.....	110
John Cleves Symmes to Dr. Boudinot, North Bend, Janu- ary 12, 1792.....	114
John Cleves Symmes to Governor Jay, North Bend, April 19, 1796.....	123
John Cleves Symmes to Capt. John Matson, North Bend, July 29, 1796.....	124
John Cleves Symmes to Thomas Jefferson, North Bend, March 4, 1801.....	125
Receipt from John Shackelford, Jr., February 5, 1805.....	126
Receipt for changing Purified Whisky, April, 1805 .....	127
John Cleves Symmes to Ethan Allen Brown, Chillicothe, January 11 and 13, 1808.....	128
John Cleves Symmes to James Findlay, North Bend, July 11, 1808.....	131
<i>Advertisement</i> by John Cleves Symmes, January 12, 1809..	134
John Cleves Symmes to Daniel Symmes, North Bend, January 31, 1809.....	135

# CONTENTS

	Page
John Cleves Symmes to Sundry Persons, 1809–1811 . . . . .	136
J[ohn] C[leves] S[ymmes] to Arthur Orr, July 8, 1811 . . . . .	136
[John Cleves Symmes] to Capt. James Logan and Mr. John Cooper, [1811?] . . . . .	137
J[ohn] C[leves] S[ymmes] to William Ward, Cincinnati, October 23, 1813 . . . . .	139
PART VI, LETTERS, CHIEFLY FROM AND TO ANNA SYMME HARRISON (MRS. WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON) . . . . .	
John Cleves Symmes to William Henry Harrison, Septem- ber 9, 1796 . . . . .	140
Maria Short to Anna Harrison, Greenfield, [before 1801] . .	140
Jane Short to Anna Harrison, Greenfield, August 12, 1803 .	141
(Copy) John Cleves Symmes to Anna Harrison, Cleves, March 7, 1808 . . . . .	142
Anna Harrison to John Cleves Short, Grouseland, July 10, 1808 . . . . .	145
[John C. Symmes Harrison to John Cleves Symmes], Grouseland, February 7, [1811]; (Enclosure) Anna Harri- son to John Cleves Symmes . . . . .	146
William Henry Harrison to Isaac Shelby, Cincinnati, March 20, 1814 . . . . .	148
A[nn]a H[arrison] to Betsey [Harrison Short], [1815] . . . . .	148
A[nn]a Harrison to Mrs. Phebe R. Reeve, North Bend, March 27, 1836 . . . . .	149
J[ohn] C[leves] S[hort] to Anna Harrison, Short Hill, August 6, 1845 . . . . .	150
Anna Harrison to Reverend William B. Sprague, North Bend, September 22, [18]45 . . . . .	152
Anna Harrison to Mrs. Henry, North Bend, May 12, [18]46	152
Anna Harrison to [John Cleves Short], North Bend, Janu- ary 30, [18]47 . . . . .	154
Anna Harrison to [John Cleves Short], North Bend, Feb- ruary 18, [18]47 . . . . .	155



# CONTENTS

	Page
A[nn]a Harrison to J[ohn] C[leves] Short, North Bend, April 3, 1847.....	156
A[nn]a Harrison to J[ohn] Cleves Short, North Bend, June 2, 1847.....	157
[Anna Harrison] to [John Cleves Short], North Bend, September 11, 1847.....	158
Anna Harrison to J[ohn] C[leves] Short, North Bend, No- vember 24, 1847.....	160
A[nn]a Harrison to J[ohn] C[leves] Short, North Bend, May 22, 1848.....	160
A[nn]a Harrison to J[ohn] Cleves Short, North Bend, July 30, 1848.....	161
A[nn]a Harrison to [John Cleves Short], North Bend, November 14, 1848.....	161
Anna Harrison to Henry C. Allen, North Bend, Septem- ber 9, 1850.....	162
Anna Harrison to [John Cleves Short], North Bend, June 23, 1851.....	162
A[nn]a H[arrison] to J[ohn] Cleves Short, North Bend, August 20, [1851].....	163
Anna Harrison to J[ohn] Cleves Short, North Bend, Sep- tember 10, [1851].....	164
Anna Harrison to J[ohn] Cleves Short, North Bend, De- cember 31, 1851.....	164
A[nn]a H[arrison] to [John Cleves Short], North Bend, August 29, [18]54.....	165
Anna Harrison to J. K. Furlong, North Bend, June 8, [18]55	166
Anna Harrison to J[ohn] Cleves Short, Longview, April 27, [1860].....	166
Anna Harrison to J[ohn] C[leves] Short, Longview, Febru- ary 6, [1862].....	167
INDEX.....	169



## INTRODUCTION

### JOHN CLEVES SYMMES, GENTLEMAN PIONEER

Supplementing the *Correspondence of John Cleves Symmes*,<sup>1</sup> this present volume has been limited to his personal letters and papers and those of his family and intimate friends. The editor's aim has been to give a fairly accurate picture of the everyday life of a large family connection, one that was dominated by its patriarchal head, John Cleves Symmes, and was knit closely together in the frontier home that was so far away from the relatives and friends of early days. It was a family connection, too, whose members struggled persistently to establish in these early settlements the high standards of living, socially and culturally, to which they had been accustomed. Thus the *Letters* help explain the remarkably rapid development of the Cincinnati region and the nearby settlements in northern Kentucky. Not less important, in the letters of John Cleves Symmes himself there is a distinctive literary merit, for they are written in a chatty, newsy style, with a dry and often sardonic humor and an unusual touch of lively description that is strongly reminiscent of Lord Chesterfield.

In this drama of family life on the frontier the leading one of the *dramatis personae* is, of course, John Cleves Symmes.<sup>2</sup> The son of Reverend Timothy Symmes, on the paternal side he descended from Reverend Zechariah Symmes, who came from Canterbury in 1634, and became pastor of the church at Charlestown, Massachusetts. His great grandson, Reverend Timothy Symmes, a graduate of Harvard, became the minister at Millington in Con-

<sup>1</sup>*The Correspondence of John Cleves Symmes*, B. W. Bond, Jr., ed., New York, 1926, pp. 1-24.

<sup>2</sup>*New Jersey Historical Society Proceedings*, Second series, vol. 5. Newark, 1879, pp. 22-43; James McBride, *Pioneer Biography*, Cincinnati, 1871, vol. II, pp. 225-228.

## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

necticut. Evidently a man of strong convictions and adventurous spirit, the Reverend Timothy was driven from his parish in 1742 on account of his activity in the Great Awakening. First he settled at Southold, Long Island, the home of his wife, Mary Cleves, and there his elder son, John Cleves Symmes, was born, July 21, 1742. From Southold he migrated westward and became a missionary on the New Jersey frontier.

Thus, John Cleves Symmes was a representative of that sturdy Puritan migration which, forsaking New England for Long Island, finally found a home in New Jersey. Fortunately, along with this restless pioneering spirit he also inherited from his Puritan forbears the more solid qualities of determination and strong individuality which were to stand him in good stead in the arduous task of founding a settlement on the Western frontier. From his Puritan ancestors, too, came cultural traditions which were to play an important role in his life. After the death of his mother, about 1746, her father, Captain John Cleves of Southold, Long Island, reared her two children, John Cleves Symmes and his younger brother, Timothy. The Cleves family, too, seem to have been people of considerable culture, and the youthful John Cleves Symmes was accustomed to visit his Massachusetts relatives.

With regard to his formal education there is little positive information. At least he studied surveying, taught school in his early life and studied law. But there is no evidence that he followed his father's example and attended college; indeed, he rather deprecated a formal college education. But his letters reflect the atmosphere of culture in which he was reared. Endowed with an active mind, evidently he did extensive reading, so that for his period John Cleves Symmes was an exceptionally well educated man. His knowledge of history and literature was especially marked and, as was so common at that period, the Greeks and Romans, and classical antiquity in general, were the especial objects of his literary interests. Nor did he neglect the sciences, mathematics especially, and many pertinent allusions show his keen interest in contemporary life and problems.



## INTRODUCTION

John Cleves Symmes acquired many influential connections by his three marriages. Anna Tuthill, whom he married in 1760, the mother of his two daughters, came from an important family of Southold, Long Island. She accompanied him to the frontier of New Jersey when he settled there in 1770 on his farm, Solitude, where she died in 1778. Of his second wife, Mary Halsey, there are few records, but it is known that she was a sister of Colonel James Henry, from a leading family in nearby Somerset County, and the widow of a member of an equally well known family of Morristown. John Cleves Symmes' third wife, Susan (Susanna) Livingston, the daughter of the first governor of the State of New Jersey, came from the influential Livingston clan of New York, and by this last marriage the often married Symmes gained much political influence, as well as social prestige.

With so many advantages of early training and family connections, added to his own native ability, John Cleves Symmes soon rose to prominence. In the Revolution he was a leader in the patriotic ranks, and was appointed a colonel in the New Jersey troops. The years 1776-1779 found him in charge of forts on the New Jersey frontier, and meanwhile he took part in numerous battles, in New Jersey and on Long Island. His civil record, too, was an honorable one. 1778-1785 he served as associate judge of the supreme court of New Jersey, and in 1785 he was elected a member of the Continental Congress. His letters show how conscientiously he carried out the duties of these various offices. About the time he entered Congress the twin ordinances for the settlement and government of the Northwest Territory were passed. To a man of Symmes' adventurous spirit this was a heaven-sent opportunity. Aided undoubtedly by his extensive political and social connections, he soon secured an appointment as a judge of the new Northwest Territory. Now the path seemed clear for the realization of his ambition to establish a settlement in the newly opened land of promise. In this arduous undertaking Judge Symmes was to display an iron determination, coupled, it must be confessed, with an optimism that ruthlessly brushed aside many details of importance. The

## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

practical results in the founding of the Miami Purchase have already been given in the *Correspondence of John Cleves Symmes*.

Of Judge Symmes' personal characteristics, the main theme of this present volume, one of the most notable was his deep affection for his immediate family as well as for a wide circle of connections and friends. To appreciate this trait, it is necessary to mention in detail the different personages who had leading roles in this drama of family life. Next in importance to the patriarchal leader, John Cleves Symmes, of course, were his two daughters, Maria Symmes Short, and Anna Symmes Harrison, and the different members of their families.

Regarding Maria Symmes, who was born on Long Island in 1762, only a few direct records have been found. While on a visit to Kentucky she met Peyton Short, and married him in 1788, living afterward on his estate, Greenfield, in Woodford County, where she died in 1801. The scattered bits of evidence reveal her as a typical well-bred woman of her period, essentially domestic and devotedly attached to her family, but one who was nevertheless a strong personality who, in her own quiet fashion, exerted a steadying influence. Of her comparatively early death, her husband wrote, nine years later: "Language can give but a faint image of the abyss of wretchedness in which I was sunk by this deplorable event."<sup>3</sup> Nor, deprived of her guidance, did he ever recover his former balance and judgment. Judge Symmes, too, was devotedly attached to his elder daughter, and after her death, he transferred his affection to her two sons, John Cleves Short and Charles Wilkins Short.

Maria's husband, Peyton Short,<sup>4</sup> likewise played a leading role in the Symmes family drama. Born in Surry County, Virginia, a member of a leading family in the Old Dominion, and a brother of the well-known diplomat, William Short, Peyton Short

<sup>3</sup>Peyton Short to Dr. Frederick Ridgely, March 14, 1810, *Clarke Mss.* (H.P.S.O.), fos. 48-49.

<sup>4</sup>*Historical and Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. V, no. 1, Cincinnati, 1910; Thomas Speed, *The Political Club of Kentucky, 1786-1790*, *Filson Club Publications*, no. 9, pp. 77-79, Louisville, 1894; *William and Mary Quarterly*, Series 2, vol. 16, pp. 420 ff., Williamsburg, 1836.



## INTRODUCTION

attended William and Mary College and was one of the fifty founders of Phi Beta Kappa. Like many another adventurous scion of Virginia families, he migrated to Kentucky in 1785, and settled near Danville. In his extensive correspondence with Peyton Short, Judge Symmes showed the affection with which he regarded his son-in-law at first, and he made persistent efforts to induce him to settle in the Miami Purchase. Indeed the two were alike in many respects. Like his father-in-law, Short was devoted to rural life and had high cultural ideals. Also, he was careless in financial matters. But here the similarity ends. Judge Symmes, with a basic Puritan fibre, was a man of iron determination and primarily a colonizer. In contrast, Peyton Short was easily influenced and credulous, satisfied with the placid life of a country gentleman, and essentially a land speculator. While his wife Maria lived, these defects in his character were not so apparent, and he became an important leader in the wave of migration that established the ideals of the Virginia gentleman in the Kentucky bluegrass region.<sup>5</sup> Incidentally, Peyton Short, like many of his fellow Virginians, was quite lukewarm toward slavery. But with characteristic indifference he temporized, and accepted an institution of which he did not approve.<sup>6</sup>

With Maria's restraining hand gone, the defects in Peyton Short's personality gradually came to the surface, especially after his second marriage, in 1803, to Mrs. Jane Henry Churchill, a sister of Judge Symmes' second wife, Mrs. Mary Henry Halsey. Endowed with an excessive optimism, he was gradually caught in the "rage of speculation" of the period. First he entered into an "unfortunate connection" with General James Wilkinson, which "dissipated" what little ready cash he possessed. Then he bought lands in Kentucky and in the Miami Purchase, suffering heavy losses in both ventures. When he attempted to recoup his fortune by further speculation in land, he became even more deeply involved. A final blow was the purchase of \$8000 worth of goods to be exchanged for whisky and flour, only to be cheated

<sup>5</sup>Irving F. Ahlquist, *Ohio Valley Culture as Reflected in the Short Family, 1790-1860*, Urbana, Ill., 1947.

<sup>6</sup>Will of Peyton Short, April 9, 1802. *Short Family Papers*.

## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

by a "dishonest employee," and this at the very time he was distracted by the death of his second wife. But Peyton Short retained the high standards of the Virginia gentleman throughout these many business difficulties. He himself acknowledged many instances of weakness and credulity on his part, but nowhere, he asserted, had he been influenced by an "unjust or dishonorable notion toward any man." In 1809 he undertook a journey to Mobile and Pensacola in the vain hope of recouping his fortune through speculation in land, but ill luck still pursued him.

The two sons of Peyton Short and Marie Symmes Short, John Cleves Short and Charles Wilkins Short, were also important figures in this life drama of John Cleves Symmes and his family. Many of his letters, and those decidedly the best, both for their general contents and their literary value, were addressed to these two grandsons. After the death of his beloved daughter, Maria, the solicitous care of the grandfather for his motherless grandsons, now respectively seven and nine years old, became all the stronger as he began to appreciate their father's instability. Including their little sister, Anna Maria, in his messages, Judge Symmes sent frequent letters to his grandsons packed with advice that covered many of the problems of their daily lives and was evidently intended to instill into them principles of correct deportment and moral standards, together with the love of learning, and a general appreciation of the amenities of life. These letters, too, were examples of infinite tact, never scolding, but teaching precepts in such indirect fashion as would appeal to immature minds.<sup>7</sup>

A notable example of these letters to his grandsons is one, exceptionally well written and really poetic in its imagery, that appealed to nine year old Charles not to disturb birds. In this same letter was a gentle reminder of the need for more intensive study. Other tactful references to the education of his two grandsons reflected the breadth of his own education. Constant allusions to the classical period, and especially to specific authors, show how well grounded Judge Symmes was in this field of study.

<sup>7</sup>Part I, Letters from John Cleves Symmes to his Grandsons, *post*, pp. 1-49.



## INTRODUCTION

Mathematics, too, he highly recommended, and in one letter he gave a rather ingenious plan for locating cities on the globe with their respective latitude and longitude. Constantly Judge Symmes tried to instill into his grandsons his own love of nature, and the soil. Yet his viewpoint was consistently a practical one. For example, Charles Wilkins Short had shown much talent for drawing, and his grandfather encouraged him in a skill which must have proved very useful in a distinguished career as a physician and a professor of *materia medica*. For his other grandson, John Cleves Short, he advised the study of law, and himself undertook to underwrite his legal training.

The strong influence of Judge Symmes was reflected in the lives of his grandsons.<sup>8</sup> Although few of their letters in response to his have been found, there is abundant evidence of the deep affection and respect with which they regarded the grandfather who watched over them so closely. From their father, Peyton Short, also, the two brothers received high ideals in their formative years, together with the best education that early Kentucky afforded. Peyton Short's financial collapse in 1809 brought Judge Symmes to the front, and he launched John Cleves Short upon a successful career as a lawyer in Cincinnati. William Short now undertook the education of his nephew, Charles Wilkins Short, and the latter became a well known physician and a professor in the Medical Institute in Louisville. The death of their uncle, William Short, in 1849, gave the two brothers ample means to indulge their taste for the cultural activities and good living in which they had been reared by their grandfather and their father. John Cleves Short at Short Hill, his country estate near Cincinnati, and Charles Wilkins Short, at Hayfield near Louisville, both contributed in large measure to the high plane of civilization in their respective communities.

These letters of Judge Symmes to his grandsons are also noteworthy for their literary quality, and they may well be compared

<sup>8</sup>Ahlquist, *Ohio Valley Culture*, pp. 3-9; J. Fletcher Brennan, *Biographical Dictionary*, Cincinnati, 1879, p. 318; *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. XVII, New York, 1935, pp. 127-128.

## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

with those of Lord Chesterfield to his son Philip Stanhope.<sup>9</sup> The two series of letters have many similarities. Each is the work of a master of style, who writes with sufficient detail to enliven the heavier passages, and in a crisp and lively fashion which makes their letters exceptionally readable. The primary purpose of both authors was to impart maxims of daily conduct along with wordly advice, one of them a father who was deeply concerned for the future of his illegitimate son, the other a grandfather who was equally solicitous for the welfare of his two motherless grandsons, who were under the care of an unstable father. In both series of letters there is much practical advice regarding such commonplace matters as dress and deportment. Both writers display the utmost tact, in order not to arouse needlessly youthful antagonism. In each instance this end is achieved by an adaptation of style and subject to the viewpoints of the recipients, the letters of Lord Chesterfield to a young man upon the threshold of active life, those of Judge Symmes to two immature boys. Both Lord Chesterfield and Judge Symmes showed an intense but controlled affection, which could sense pitfalls and faults, rather than a blind devotion which would not recognize personal defects.

Here the similarity ends. Aside from an exceptional ability to express themselves freely, and a determination to inculcate their own view of life, Lord Chesterfield and John Cleves Symmes were in decided contrast. The former, a representative of the decadent court life of the Eighteenth Century in England and on the Continent, was well educated and his letters are those of a polished and cynical man of the world writing from his own varied experience, with only a few bits of homely news and gossip included. But the letters of Judge Symmes are those of an entirely different personality, for the author represented a refreshing New World point of view, in contrast to the jaded attitude of the Old World. Lacking a formal education he was, nevertheless, a cultivated man with an innate love of books, and in spite of numerous

<sup>9</sup>*Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield*, 3 vols., John Bradshaw, ed., London, 1913, *passim*.



## INTRODUCTION

orthographical errors, his letters reveal a comparatively youthful and alert personality, in contrast to that of the world weary Lord Chesterfield. The many touches of nature, the unaffected interest in agricultural pursuits, the practical standpoint so constantly in evidence, all reflect the wide-awake life of the pioneer in the Old Northwest, in contrast to the well-bred cynicism of the cultured English gentleman.

Of the members of this pioneer family, Judge Symmes' younger daughter, Anna, was a figure of importance in her own right, as the wife of the ninth president of the United States. From her own correspondence, together with the many allusions in these *Letters*, a very definite picture may be drawn of this gentlewoman of the Western frontier.<sup>10</sup> Born in New Jersey in 1775, she lost her mother at an early age, and was reared by her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Tuthill of Southold, Long Island. Trained in the thrift and womanly accomplishments of her class, she also received intensive religious instruction which made a permanent impression. Nor was her education neglected, although, like her father and many of her contemporaries, she frequently made orthographical slips in her letters.

In 1794 Anna Symmes went to the Western country, and a new era began in her hitherto tranquil life. She has been portrayed at this time as a quiet, handsome and well poised girl. In a country where the men so greatly outnumbered the women she did not long remain single. While visiting her sister, Maria Short, in Kentucky, she met William Henry Harrison, son of Governor Benjamin Harrison of Berkeley on the James River, and a scion of one of the most distinguished families in Virginia. The dashing young army officer, just back from Wayne's campaign, quickly fell in love with the attractive girl from New Jersey. Unfortunately Judge Symmes did not fancy the young Virginian as a son-in-law. Although he recognized his military standing and ability, he was greatly perturbed over his lack of any other profession except that of arms. But Anna had a mind of her own, and not waiting

<sup>10</sup>Laura C. Holloway, *The Ladies of the White House*, Philadelphia, 1881, pp. 286-305; Part VI, Letters from and to Anna Harrison, *post*, pp. 140-167.

## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

for her father's approval, she was married November 22, 1795, at his home to be sure, but in his absence.

The denouement was a partial estrangement. Judge Symmes stubbornly refused to forgive his son-in-law, although he still remained on affectionate terms with his daughter. Anna Harrison now showed the same quiet persistence as when she had insisted upon marrying the man of her choice. Fifteen years later she begged her father to visit her home, tactfully including General Harrison in the invitation. To strengthen her plea she enclosed a letter from her little son, her father's namesake, John Cleves Symmes Harrison. Her persistence won, and Judge Symmes, thoroughly disillusioned with regard to his other son-in-law, Peyton Short, finally turned to General Harrison to settle his tangled affairs as he felt death approaching.

Like her father, Judge Symmes, Mrs. Harrison was a person with strong family affection. And this characteristic was especially evident in her attitude toward her numerous in-laws. In spite of her devotion to her sister Maria, she welcomed Peyton Short's second wife, Mrs. Jane Henry Churchill. In similar fashion, after the death of her own daughter, Betsey Bassett Harrison, who had married John Cleves Short, Mrs. Harrison accepted her nephew's second wife in the same kindly fashion. Also, like her father, Mrs. Harrison never lost the longing for her childhood home and her early associates and relatives.

But life was by no means easy for this younger daughter of John Cleves Symmes. The many absences of her husband left to her the main burden of bringing up a family of nine children,<sup>11</sup> along with the ever present worries of a pioneer household. Constant financial difficulties added to her burden. Aside from the usual frontier scarcity of ready money, Mrs. Harrison seems to have shared her father's carelessness in money matters, and in her later life the long delayed settlement of General Harrison's estate added to her problems. But her letters reveal the high courage and religious faith with which she faced life. On her farm

<sup>11</sup>There were ten children, but one died in infancy. James A. Green, *William Henry Harrison*, Richmond, 1941, pp. 485-490.



## INTRODUCTION

at North Bend she attempted to maintain the hospitable traditions of her own and her husband's family, and to uphold her own position as the widow of a president of the United States. Like her father, Mrs. Harrison gracefully accepted the hardships of frontier life. Altogether, so well did she play her dignified and quiet domestic role that she may be taken as a notable representative of the many women who had so important a part in establishing the culture of the older Seaboard in their new homes on the Western frontier.

In contrast to Mrs. Harrison, who so readily adapted herself to the crudities of the frontier, was Mrs. Susan (Susanna) Symmes, Judge Symmes' third wife.<sup>12</sup> From the very first this daughter of the Livingstons faced the inconveniences of life in the Miami Purchase with much trepidation. Judge Symmes had proposed at first that she should spend part of her time in the Miami Purchase and part in New Jersey. But like many another suitor, he seems to have forgotten this plan, once they were married. Soon after their marriage early in 1794 he took his bride on the long and arduous journey to the Ohio country. For a time life seems to have run smoothly for his new wife, who speedily made firm friends of his two daughters, and Mrs. Symmes was accustomed to stay with one or the other during her husband's many absences.

Anxious to please his new wife, Judge Symmes built a house at North Bend, according to Mrs. Symmes' plans, that was quite elaborate for the time and place. Thomas Ashe, the English traveller who stopped for breakfast with Judge Symmes on his trip down the Ohio in 1806, has left a most favorable, if slightly exaggerated, report of the North Bend house and its occupants.<sup>13</sup> The "noble stone mansion," he wrote, was set amid a "pastoral scene" of woods, orchards, corn fields, pastures and the like, overlooking the river. In similarly roseate fashion, Ashe characterized Mrs. Symmes as "a lady distinguished by elegance of mind, and a general and correct information." Residing with Judge and

<sup>12</sup>Part III, Letters Relating to Mrs. Susan (Susanna) Symmes, *post*, pp. 73-90.

<sup>13</sup>Thomas Ashe, *Travels in America*, London, 1808, p. 231.

## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

Mrs. Symmes was a Miss Livingston, a younger sister of Mrs. Symmes, whom they treated with the "parental kindness and respectful urbanity due her family, eminent by birth, property and talent in the state of New York . . ." When the beauties of the season faded, according to Ashe, the Judge and the ladies were accustomed to seek Cincinnati and its pleasures. Ashe concluded, "I could with great difficulty tear myself from persons so amiable."

But underneath this apparently placid surface, trouble was brewing, what with Judge Symmes' frequent absences, and the disagreements that soon arose over finances. Mrs. Symmes, it seems, had considerable property of her own, although not near so large a fortune as Judge Symmes had supposed. After their marriage she insisted upon handing over control of her property to her sister, Mrs. Ridley. But Judge Symmes would not consent, even though he himself, he declared, had no idea of asserting his own claims. For a time the dispute over finances seems gradually to have simmered down; and Mrs. Symmes adjusted herself to life at North Bend, with frequent visits to her two step-daughters and to her old home. But life with Judge Symmes must have been far from placid. Finally, in the summer of 1808 she returned to New York, evidently for an indefinite stay. There is no mention in the family records of the specific causes of this apparently peaceful separation. It is significant, however, that afterwards, Judge Symmes did not mention his wife in his letters, but whatever the trouble, Mrs. Symmes did not quarrel with her in-laws. In a letter written a few months after her husband's death, she showed a warm interest in the entire Symmes family, and an especial affection for Mrs. Harrison.

Of Judge Symmes' many correspondents, the most important, outside his immediate family, was his intimate friend and confidant, Robert Morris of New Brunswick, New Jersey.<sup>14</sup> Although John Cleves Symmes was three years older, their friendship was of

<sup>14</sup>Part IV, Chiefly Correspondence, John Cleves Symmes and Robert Morris, *post*, pp. 91-105; for Robert Morris, see *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. XIII, New York, 1934, pp. 223-224.



## INTRODUCTION

long standing, and they were on intimate terms as early as 1769 before Symmes settled in New Jersey. Each of them read law, and the two young lawyers must have met frequently at Morristown, halfway between the Symmes estate, Solitude, and New Brunswick. After the New Jersey legislature in 1777 appointed both of them to the supreme court of the state, Robert Morris as chief justice and John Cleves as an associate justice, their friendship became even stronger. After Judge Morris resigned from the bench in 1779, he practiced law in New Brunswick, and acted as business agent in New Jersey for Judge Symmes, who was now increasingly absorbed in his plans for a Western colony. In this capacity Judge Morris collected a considerable part of his client's income, notably his salary as a judge of the Northwest Territory and the returns from his farm in New Jersey, and settled many accounts.

Unfortunately, Judge Symmes' financial affairs soon became much involved, chiefly as a result of his own carelessness in money matters. The problem of settling with Congress and with the many private claimants who had purchased his Western lands became an increasingly difficult one, and usually his account was overdrawn. Also Judge Morris took an important part in his friend's domestic difficulties, and both Judge Symmes and his wife, Mrs. Susan Symmes, appealed to him in their disagreement over money matters. It was probably chiefly due to Judge Morris that the quarrel was adjusted sufficiently, so that the two managed to live together for a dozen years longer. Meanwhile Judge Symmes' financial troubles continued, and in 1797, at the end of his patience, Judge Morris called for a final accounting. Although his letter was couched in the usual friendly terms, he made it quite evident that he was unwilling to take charge of his friend's tangled financial affairs any longer.

In these letters to Robert Morris, just as in those to his grandsons, Judge Symmes expressed himself so freely that they are especially revealing of the author's personality, written as they were to an intimate friend rather than to immature boys. Mingled with flashes of the whimsical humor and sardonic touches that were so characteristic of Judge Symmes' style, there were pungent com-

## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

ments on such varied subjects as the Indian situation in the Western country, the Whisky Rebellion, Jay's Treaty, and the choice of a chief justice after John Jay's election as governor of New York, all of them indicative of an exceptionally keen and intelligent interest in public affairs. There were passages, too, in these confidential letters to Robert Morris that were striking revelations of the many hardships of pioneer life, notably the many long and arduous trips which Judge Symmes was obliged to undertake in carrying out his duties as a judge of the territorial court. The varied problems that beset the pioneer farmer were also noted, and constant references, as might be expected, showed the author's strong family affection. Altogether, the Morris Correspondence supplements the insight into the personality of John Cleves Symmes which is found elsewhere in these *Letters*.

One bit of especial interest in the Morris Correspondence is a catalogue of books which Judge Morris seems to have sold for Judge Symmes in 1783.<sup>15</sup> Covering a wide range of subjects, scientific and mathematical, historical, classical and philosophical, the individual titles make up a library that for Eighteenth Century America was unusually varied and well chosen, and one that must have been gradually collected, perhaps by John Cleves Symmes' Puritan forebears. Certainly this catalogue of books suggests the source of the frequent literary and scientific allusions in his *Letters*. Such a library was in fact an important link in transmitting the cultural ideals of the Eighteenth Century to the raw Western settlements.

These personal letters of John Cleves Symmes also contain many references to a wide circle of relatives and friends and especially to the family of Timothy Symmes, his younger brother, who likewise settled in the Miami Purchase. After Timothy's death in 1797, with his strong family affection, Judge Symmes promptly took on his brother's numerous family.<sup>16</sup> Closest to him apparently was Daniel Symmes, who graduated at Princeton,

<sup>15</sup>Catalogue of Books, 1783, *post*, pp. 93-95.

<sup>16</sup>James McBride, *Pioneer Biography*, vol. II, Cincinnati, 1871, pp. 229 ff.



## INTRODUCTION

studied law and became Judge Symmes' local business agent. And it was with pardonable family pride that his uncle called attention to Daniel's appointment by the state legislature to succeed Judge Meigs of the general court. Nor was Judge Symmes too busy to give special attention to a younger nephew, Peyton Short Symmes, who spent much time at the home of Peyton Short with his two cousins of about the same age. Judge Symmes frequently mentioned his nephew, and in a letter to him alone he chided Peyton for his careless manners, but in a tactful fashion that is strikingly reminiscent of numerous letters from Lord Chesterfield to his son. From time to time Judge Symmes also mentioned his brother's other children, Timothy, William, Celadon, his two daughters, and especially his own namesake, Captain John Cleves Symmes, the eccentric author of *The Theory of Concentric Spheres*, who inherited the same determination and love of adventure, as well as the scientific interest which distinguished his uncle.

Fortunately, it has been possible to include in this volume a few letters to and from persons outside Judge Symmes' intimate family circle.<sup>17</sup> One of the most significant was marked by a strong sense of justice in a plea for Charles Vattier, who had been convicted of embezzlement from the office of General James Findlay, receiver general of the public land office at Cincinnati. Already Vattier had been held in prison for more than a year, awaiting the settlement of large judgments against him. Without passing upon his guilt or innocence, Judge Symmes denounced what promised to be a life imprisonment as contrary to the principles of a "land of freedom." This same sense of justice he showed in the strong opposition to slavery, which he doubtless inherited from his Puritan forebears. In characteristic fashion he made an apt comparison between the aristocratic viewpoint of slaveholding Kentucky and the democratic ideals of the free Northwest Territory. This opposition to slavery he handed down to his grandson, John Cleves Short, who, in contrast to his father's rather supine acquiescence in an institution which he really opposed,

<sup>17</sup>Part V, Miscellaneous Letters and Papers, *post*, pp. 106-139.

## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

followed the example of his stiff-backed grandfather, and chose the free soil north of the Ohio as his home.<sup>18</sup>

Undoubtedly this strong opposition to slavery was a determining factor in John Cleves Symmes' final decision to establish his new settlement in the free Northwest Territory rather than in slaveholding Kentucky, even though many personal influences drew him to the latter. Two letters in his best chatty style to Richard Clough Anderson, surveyor general of the Virginia bounty lands, show that Judge Symmes had many friends among the leaders in the easygoing plantation life that had already taken root in Kentucky. The marriage of his daughter, Maria, to Peyton Short was an even stronger influence drawing him to Kentucky. But in the end his Puritan prejudice against the slavery system triumphed, and John Cleves Symmes chose rather the many hardships and problems of establishing a settlement on what was then a raw frontier, but one that was democratic and free.

Not the least of the many problems that beset Judge Symmes, as his papers abundantly testify, was that of finances. And indeed, at times he was practically reduced to penury, as witness a letter to his nephew, Daniel Symmes, begging for the loan of \$11. Even more revealing was another note, also to Daniel Symmes, asking for a loan of \$1.00 in order to buy some peaches. Doubtless his kind heart was partly responsible for these financial troubles, for he was constantly making out orders upon different merchants in favor of his many friends. On rare occasions he actually settled his accounts, as a payment of \$25 to Robert Maxwell on May 9, 1809, shows. But Judge Symmes should not be held wholly responsible for his financial troubles. In addition to the scarcity of ready money, there was the difficulty of collecting from his own debtors, and even when they paid it was usually in kind. With characteristic persistence, however, Judge Symmes continued his attempts to collect what was owing him, and especially the rents that were due from his tenants.

<sup>18</sup>John Cleves Short to John Cleves Symmes, January 14, 1812, *post*, pp. 47-49.



## INTRODUCTION

There is considerable evidence that Judge Symmes on occasion could be a careful bargainer, as in the meticulous care with which he drew up a list of the supplies he needed to erect a grist mill; fifteen years later, when repairs became necessary, he gave this same careful attention to details in the terms of the contract. Two recipes for changing purified whisky into "spirits of a different name and quality" further demonstrated his practical point of view. Whisky was then a widely used medium of exchange in the Western world, and especially in the down-river trade in which Judge Symmes was actively engaged; consequently these recipes must have been of considerable value to him. In the details of farming, too, Judge Symmes was the hard-headed practical Puritan, as many scattered bits in his gossipy letters show. Nor, true to type, did he hesitate to work, himself, in the field as was so customary among the pioneers of the democratic Northwest Territory.

Turning to another aspect of Judge Symmes' versatile personality, there is evidence of unusually clear thinking and good judgment, as in two notable letters which deal with outstanding problems of the Northwest Territory. One was a summary of reforms needed in the judicial system, the other an analysis of St. Clair's ill-fated campaign against the Indians; both of them show strong hostility to Governor St. Clair. Apparently the first letter was the joint product of Judge George Turner's legal weight combined with Judge Symmes' very practical point of view. Both of them were members of the general court of the territory. First, this keen analysis pointed out the utter impracticality of many of the laws which a Congress, sitting in far-off Philadelphia, had passed with scant regard for the particular needs of the primitive Northwest Territory. Also, this letter cited the drastic necessity for a systematic reorganization of the judiciary system. Significantly this letter from the two judges was addressed to Winthrop Sargent, who was then acting governor in St. Clair's absence.

This hostility to St. Clair was even more evident in the second letter, which severely criticized his campaign. Nowhere does Judge

## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

Symmes mention the Governor, but in his usual subtle fashion, his letter pointed inexorably to St. Clair as the man who was primarily responsible. This letter is especially notable for its intimate knowledge of the terrain and local conditions, obviously the product of Judge Symmes' many journeys as a member of the general court of the Northwest Territory. With evident authority, it pointed out the many mistakes in the conduct of the campaign, as well as the inadequacy of the troops. Incidentally it showed how Indian campaigns should not be conducted, and thus furnished an invaluable criterion for the future. This masterly summary of St. Clair's campaign, together with the equally incisive criticism of the judiciary system, gives Judge Symmes high rank among the men who shaped American territorial policy.

Another notable letter in this miscellaneous correspondence, of an entirely different type, one to his brother-in-law Governor Jay of New York, is an outstanding example of Judge Symmes' innate courtesy. It is also an evidence of the friendly relations he enjoyed with many leading men of the times. Still another letter of exceptional interest is one to Thomas Jefferson as president of the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, in which Judge Symmes recommended to Jefferson's patronage two residents of the Miami Purchase who were applying for a patent on their invention of a steam engine for navigation. Doubtless Judge Symmes was acquainted with a similar invention by his wife's cousin, Robert Livingston, and the value of such an advance in transportation to the inhabitants of the Miami Purchase must have appealed to his practical yet imaginative mind.

All these varied personal touches shed light upon the versatile interests of the founder of the Miami Purchase, revealing his many-sided personality, his practical point of view as a pioneer farmer, the difficulties with which he contended in establishing his frontier settlement, and his wide knowledge of the Northwest Territory and its problems. Supplementing the more intimate family letters, they complete the personal picture of John Cleves Symmes, the patriarchal founder of the Miami Purchase, who with his family

## INTRODUCTION

and their many connections played so large a part in establishing comparatively high ideals of culture in the settlements between the Miamis and across the Ohio in Kentucky.

Cincinnati, September 1, 1956

BEVERLEY W. BOND JR.





PART I

LETTERS FROM JOHN CLEVES SYMMES  
TO HIS GRANDSONS

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[O. H. S. Mss.]

Cincinnati June the 2nd 1803.

And pray my dear grandson Charles, was you not looking for birds eggs, while your brother John was writing a kind letter to grand-pah.<sup>1</sup> Your brother was willing to believe you was gone to college, but was he not mistaken? Or was you gone to market to buy something good to put in your pocket when you went to school. well tis no matter my child where you was, so that you did not climb trees after birds-nests and endanger your neck or limbs by a fall. and so that you never robb a poor mother of a bird, of her poor little family of children or nestlings, and take them home to starve & die, hark! do you not hear how the old birds cry and beg and plead with you to spare their young brood, did you not seem to hear them say, "O dear little Master [Charles] have pity on my dear offspring, "that I have [just] hatched and taken so much pains every hour to "[feed] remember that I sat two weeks on my eggs in order [to] "hatch them, half starving myself all that time [having] little or no "time to hunt about for flies worms & [seeds] to feed myself with, "and then I was so much [afraid] to leave my nest, lest some naughty "hard-hearted boys [should] come in my absence and carry away "my eggs, but I [least] thought that so good a little boy as Master

<sup>1</sup>John Cleves Short was now eleven years old, his brother, Charles Wilkins Short, was almost nine. Cf. Introduction, *ante*, p. xx. Their sister, Anna Maria, was about three years old. She married Dr. Benjamin Dudley of Lexington. Speed, *Political Club of Kentucky*, 1786-1790, p. 79

## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

“Charles [would] ever disturb my eggs or my young birds, and sure  
“[that he] will not now wound my tender feelings so much [as] to  
“take away my darling birds. O master Charles [leave] them till  
“they are grown big birds and can fly about, and I will fly every  
“morning with my young brood, to the peach trees and apples  
“trees and plumb trees and rose and courant bushes that are in  
“your garden and about the house you are in, and we will sing for  
“you as soon as ’tis day light that you may hear us when you first  
“wake in the morning, and we will chant for you our best songs  
“and most delightful music; and when you rise out of your bed and  
“being dressed, as you run every morning to the spring or the well  
“to wash your face and hands, then we will all fly about you, and  
“skip and hop about on the limbs & boughs of the trees and on the  
“green grass and fences, & when you go to school we will fly over  
“your head in little flocks, as we shall be sure if you are so tender  
“hearted as to spare our nests when in your power, you will not  
“afterwards throw stones at us, and kill us, or it may be break our  
“wings or our legs, as some cruel boys delight to do. Now dear  
“master Charles if you will agree to this truce between us the birds  
“on one side, and you on the other, we will hereafter live in peace  
“& friendship with each other all the days of our lives.

Your brother tells me that you are reading Erasmus — good-boy, learn with all your might and attention, though you are younger, try if you cannot overtake your brother Johnny. You are big enough now to write letters to grandpah as well as Johnny, you will therefore send grandpah a letter, that he may see how well you can write and spell. Nothing will please grandpah so much as to know that you are learning fast and will soon be good and great schollars. Grandpah knows that if you are well learned in books and science, you can hereafter learn men and the world, and then you will be [great] as well as good men. Your state will make you [judges] or members of Congress, and it may be something still higher. but in order to be beloved [by your] fellows both while at school and after you [are] men, you must never be proud and scornful, [never] quarelsome and fight, nor hard to please [nor] [find]ing fault with every thing that falls in your way. On the contrary you must always be in a pleasant humer, seemingly well pleased with every



## TO HIS GRANDSONS

thing. speaking respectfully to those older than yourself, and kindly to those of your own age or younger. When you see any person in distress pity them, if they are poor and starving for want of victuals or cloaths give them a four pence half penny piece of silver or some coppers if you have any in your pocket, and if you have not, then tell them you are sorry that you have no money, or you would have given them some. such conduct will make every body love you and speak well of you. but above all things you must love and take care of your dear little sister Anna, when you walk together lead her by the hand. when you talk with her try to please her and not cross her, nor make her cry. when you go to see her always carry her a cake or an apple or some thing good to eat, this will make her love you, and always glad to see you. she will run to meet you when she sees you coming, and will be sorry when you go away and leave her. some naughty boys do not care any thing about their brothers and sisters, but my dear Charles will not be so rude & so unlike a genteel and benevolent hearted little boy. when you write to grandpah you must inform grandpah all about your dear little sister, where she lives, whether she can talk plain, whether she begins to learn her a.b.c. what she calls you & what she calls Johnny. When Your vacation comes on, and you find Yourself disengaged from school, cannot you and Your brother Johnny prevail with Your pah to furnish you with horses and Jo. or some other company to ride with you to Cincinnati and make a visit to your grandpah; here you will also meet with your little cousines Peyton Symmes and William Symmes who are fine little boys and will be very glad to see you here. Peyton can draw pictures of eagles and other birds and many other things and grandpah will give you some new cloaths, other pretty things. You and your brother ought to write a letter to your dear cousines Betsey Harrison & Symmes Harrison, for they will be very glad to hear from [you] and from your dear little sister Anna. And you must send your love to grandmah, & Aunt Anna, and Uncle Harrison and all your little cousines, & put the letter in the post office at Lexington and it will go directly to Vincennes.

Kiss dear little sister Anna for grandpah, and tell her that her grand pah sends an hundred kisses to her, but she will [not] know

## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

who you mean by her grandpah. It may be [that] Grand pah & grand mah may come to see you all next fall, and it may be bring you some pretty things.

You will preserve this letter, my grandson, and read it over and over again until it is worn out by reading it. doing so will learn you to read writings well, and you will not so soon forget that you are never to be hard-hearted to little birds nor to any other living creature. and tell brother Johnny that he must long preserve his letter also, and both of you strive who can read grand-pahs letters best, and which of you can most readily and perseveringly follow the advice which grand-pah sends to you by his letters

june 3rd Being for a day or two past much [occupied] with business and throng of people, I was not able to finish all my letters at once, so I will now my dear grandson write out your sheet. When you write to grand-pah my dear Charles tell grandpah how many little boys go to school with you, and how many, or whether any can read and write better than you can. and let me know who is the very best little boy in all the college.

Give grandpahs respects to pah & mah, and my love to brother Johnny. You must also read the Oeconomy of human life, and get whole chapters of it by heart that you may never forget its precepts.

And now I believe Charles that you are pretty well tired with reading grand pahs letter. so my dear grandson I must bid you farewell.

Master Chs W. Short

God bless and preserve you very long.

John C Symmes

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Cincinnati, January the 22nd 1804

My dear grandson Charles,

I thank you for your very good letter which shows me that you have genius at one of the fine arts, and I doubt not but in time you will excel in many others besides drawing; you write a very tolerable hand, and by the time you are as old as your brother is now,



## TO HIS GRANDSONS

you will perhaps write as well as he does at present, for writing will improve your hand more and more, so you must write a letter one week to Grandpah and brother Johnny must write to Grandpah the next week, so that Grandpah may get one letter a week from one or the other of you — and in your letter [you] must alway tell grandpah how little dear sister Anna Maria is in health, & where she is, and what she can say for herself, & when you have heard from your little cousines, and from your aunt Anna, and Grandmah at Vincennes, and you must draw some pictures for your little cousines and send them in a letter to your aunt Harrison at Vincennes, for which they will be very thankful to you.

Grandpah is now in good health, but finds the weather very cold & disagreeable, for he always hates cold weather much more than the hottest season.

Give Grandpahs regards to your honord pah & mah & cousine Polly, and kiss little dear sister Anna Maria for Grandpah when you see her, and tell her grandpah longs to see her. — from your

Master C. W. Short                      affectionate grandpah — J. C. Symmes

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO JOHN CLEVES SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

[Cincinnati, January, 1804]

To master John Cleves Short; and how do you do my dear grandson? I thank you for your kind letter of the 8th Instant. You must remember my son, that I cannot always acknowledge the receipt of your letters, and I am frequently abroad at the Bend or else where on post-days & therefore have not the opportunity for a week & some times two weeks to write to you — But you & brother Charles must lay it down as a rule one or the other of you to write a letter to Grandpah once a week alternately, you one week & Charles the next, but always seal the sheet you write on, for if you put a wrapper on it, it comes to double postage, one sheet a yard square pays but 12½ cents, but two peices of paper no bigger than your two hands pays 25 cents-

Peyton Short Symmes is a lazy boy, he had rather catch snow-birds than write letters, but I w[ill] try to prevail on him to write



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

to you again. there are three beautiful red-birds that frequent his brother Daniels garden & corncribb since the hard cold & snow set in, and he & his brother Timmy are trying their ingenuity to catch them, but as yet the red-birds out-wit them fairly.

Virgil is not so easily gone through my son, and much patience and perseverance is necessary, nor is it very material whether you read Virgil or Horace, for some boys know more of the Latin by reading Virgil alone, than some others do who pretend to have read both, and after all ought to have the Vocabulary put again into their hands. Please to present my respects to Doctor Ridgely & your good Aunt Ridgeley. You must frequently write to some of your relation at Vincennes that your friends there may know how you all do. We have had very cold snowy-weather here for two weeks past & it is now remarkable fine sley-riding.

[Tell] your honord pah when you see him that I have not yet heard of his horse being sent to Mr G———, and I wish your pah to write to some person at Northbend or the Point to hunt up the horse he was to have from Mr Post, for by what I can learn the horse is now running in the woods below the great Miami River, where he will certainly get very poor, and perhaps lost altogether, for Mr Post is gone down the River if the present hard weather has not prevented him, as his boat was ready the week before last when I was at the point.

Tell you pah that Col. Israel Ludlow is dead<sup>2</sup> — he died after five days illness. Doctor Selmon attended him, he is to be buried tomorrow.

Inform also your cousine Polly that her mah has been poorly with the cholic, but is now much better. her brothers and sisters are in tolerable good health, only her brother Celadon continues poorly.

January 28 th 1804. Missing the last mail, I did not finish this letter till now. Your pah's horse was brought up to me yesterday & is now in my stable, I shall take the first oportunity to send him to Doctor Ridgely in Lexington for your pah. he is in pretty good order. Let your dear pah know as soon as possible that his lands

<sup>2</sup>Colonel Israel Ludlow, one of the original proprietors, was an important pioneer. Cf. *Symmes Correspondence*. Bond, ed., p. 40 (note 30).

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

here are advertised to be sold for the taxes towards the last of next month february. If I had the money or could get it, I would pay his tax, it is about 47 dollars that the lands are advertised for — tell your pah I wish him to write to me immediately what can be done in the business.

Wishing you my dear grandson health and a clear head to aid you in your studies,

I remain your affectionate G.pah

Master John C. Short.

John Cleves Symmes

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO  
JOHN CLEVES SHORT AND CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Cincinnati. 26th February 1804.

My dear grandsons, John & Charles, why is it so long since I have had the pleasure of a letter from either of you? Surely you have not so soon forgot your grandpah. no, no, that is not the case; well then I will hope the best & believe it is because you ply your book so closely, that you could not get time to write to your grandpah for some weeks past.

But what shall I write to you my dear boys? Shall I enquire how you succeed in your studies? and what books you read by way of amusement and pastime?

If your pah has Kennetts antiquities,<sup>3</sup> I would recommend it to you Johnny, as a proper book for you to amuse yourself with at your leisure hours, for it is very entertaining as well as very instructing at the same time. it will prepare you for reading the Roman History, and it will tend to perfect you in your Latin, for tho' the body of the book is in English, Yet there is much latin interspersed throughout the whole. The book treats of the City of Rome, its growth & decay, the Religion, Government, laws, art of war, Games, Shows, races, gladiators, stageplayers, mimicks, funeral-games, the Roman habits, marriages, entertainments,

<sup>3</sup>Basil Kennett, Oxon. *The Antiquities of Rome, London, 1696* went through at least eleven editions up to 1746. It was not included in the Catalogue of Books Judge Symmes sold in 1783, *post*, pp. 93–95.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

Names, money &c. &c. which being thoroughly read by you now while young, you never can forget, and you will find it of the greatest use to you all your life, either in reading of, or conversing on the Romans, their government, or their wars. Indeed none can well understand the Roman history, without a previous knowledge of what this book contains.

And what book shall grand-pah recommend to you my dear Charles? Why let it be the Preceptor, my son, which book will be very pleasing and amusing to you, & at the same time it will be very instructive and from it you will learn many things that will be of the greatest use to you all your life. In this book is a variety of amusing studies for the employment of the mind and the hand, and grandpah wishes you may be made perfect in the accomplishment of both. Peyton & Timmy are both abroad, one at his mothers the other at his brothers. kiss your dear sweet sister Anna Maria for grandpah when you see her, & tell her that grandpah loves her very much. dear Boys adieu.

John Cleves Symmes

Masters John & Charles. Short

[Addressed:] Masters John Cleves Short, and Charles Wilkins Short, at the Academy<sup>4</sup> in Lexington Kentucky.

I sent in Your pahs horse to him by Young Mr Holeman, who lives within a mile of your pahs, with his mother the widow Holeman — send word to your pah of this, that he may get the horse, if Mr Holeman should neglect to send him home.

J C S.

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO

JOHN CLEVES SHORT AND CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Cincinnati 12th March 1804.

My dear John and Charles,

With these come my best regards, I am in good health: are you so? and is Your pah & mah and little sister so? is Your cousine

<sup>4</sup>The "Academy" founded in 1780 under a grant from the legislature of Virginia, first opened in 1785 near Danville, but was moved to Lexington, and consolidated with Kentucky Academy. In 1799 it became Transylvania University. G. W. Ranck, *History of Lexington, Kentucky*, Cincinnati, 1872, pp. 41-42; Lewis Collins, *History of Kentucky*, Covington, 1874, vol. II, p. 183.



## TO HIS GRANDSONS

Polly ready to return to Cincinnati? and how does she expect to return? because it is near the time she ought to be at home to prepare herself for a Journey to Vincennes. Has your honord pah received his horse that I sent him by young Mr Holeman who lives near Your pah's with his mother the widow Holeman? I came from N.Bend to day, and a very snowy day it is. they are well in that quarter; corn has become very scarce & half a dollar per bushel cash current, & some demand 75 cents, and will not sell under, and it is supposed to be current at that before harvest. when it rains homony, our dish is generally bottom upwards. "they do things better in France"

By this day's mail I received a letter from Govn Harrison. he writes me that Your aunt Anna has been very sick for some time past, but is now recovering. I believe that I shall go for your grand-mah about the 20th of May, and my rout will be from Northbend to Larenceburgh & thence through the woods to Vincennes on Kibby's trace.<sup>5</sup> I expect that one of Polly's brothers will go with us to Vincennes, and some other company. the latter end of May will be a pleasant season to travel through the woods. Let your cousine Polly know this as soon as you can. It is now a long time my dear grandsons since I had a letter from either of you. write to me by all means the next mail. Give my love to pah, mah, Polly, & your dear sweet sister Anna Maria, and kiss her for grand-pah. adieu my dear boys.

Your loving grandpah

Masters John & Charles.

Jno C. Symmes

[Addressed:] Masters John C. Short, and Charles W. Short. at the Academy Lexington Kentucky

If you cannot procure Kennets Roman antiquities, let me know it, I think I can procure it for you. but if Your pah has it not, perhaps you may borrow it

<sup>5</sup>Kibby's Trace was surveyed by Captain Ephraim Kibby in 1799 from Cincinnati to Vincennes. From the mouth of the Miami to Vincennes, the distance across country, he estimated, was 155 miles and 49 poles. Archibald Shaw, *History of Dearborn County, Indiana*, Indianapolis, 1915, p. 437.

## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO PEYTON SHORT SYMMES

[*Short Family Letters,*]

[Cincinnati, March 12, 1804]

My dear Nephew Peyton Short Symmes.<sup>6</sup> While I was writing to my two grandsons I did not forget my nephew Peyton. there are other virtues besides activity & oeconomy very becoming for young master to pay the utmost attention to. among a thousand others politeness and ease of manners is not the least important, and it costs the practiser of it so little that one can but wonder that every lad does not acquire that inestimable grace. there is no secret in the business nor hard lesson to learn to make yourself master of it. You have nothing more to do than to refrain from saying anything that shall offend. there are many words in the English language that boys ought never to learn, such as I will, I won't, you shall, you shan't, You lie, you dog, you scoundrel &c &c. a boy can never utter any such words but it makes his mouth blacker than it would be if he were to eat char-coal for his breakfast. there are many other words that keeps their mouths cleaner & sweeter than a tooth-brush or sugar-candy, such as, sir if it be your pleasure, madam will you honor me with your command, Please to pardon my inattention, The most correct memory sometimes sleeps, I admit your superiority but beg nevertheless to be heard — It is very possible I may not have understood you properly — I will endeavor to recollect myself better hereafter. It gives me pain that I can contribute no more than I do to your happiness, &c &c, always speaking in pleasant language, with a due interlarding of sir, and madam but not too often. Sir or madam perpetually dropping from the tongue favors too much of the clown or sycophant. the manner of your expressions has a wonderful effect, let it be neither blunt nor affected, too low nor too loud, be graceful, not speaking with your eyes another way, and appear all attention while others speak to you, over your inferiors never seem to triumph, & to your superiors be submissive but not abashed. nature is the best preceptor in such cases, custom is often a tyrant.

<sup>6</sup>Peyton Short Symmes, 1793–1864, a younger son of Timothy Symmes, John Cleves Symmes' brother, became register of the land office at Cincinnati, and was the author of many articles for the local papers. McBride, *Pioneer Biography*, vol. II, pp. 230–232.



## TO HIS GRANDSONS

Your mah sisters & brothers are all well, Mr Davidson is waiting so I bid you an affectionate adieu

John C. Symmes.

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO  
JOHN CLEVES SHORT AND CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Cincinnati, April the 1st 1804.

My dear grandsons,

As I have nothing very interesting to treat of at present, I will bring into a short view for your ease and information, a catalogue of the Kings of Rome, most celebrated Dictators, & Consuls, and of the Roman Emperors, and the order in which they succeeded each other. this short list or catalogue you will do well to learn by heart — the order in which the kings reigned is correct, and that of the Emperors, I believe is nearly so; but I have not attempted the true order of the Dictators & Consuls. But set them down as I glanced along in my recollection from the beginning of the Republic to the assumption of the government by Julius Caesar. \* \* \* When you have impressed your minds fully with the remembrance of the foregoing catalogue and the succession of the kings and Emperors, I will my dear sons, furnish you with the residue of the Emperors. But you are not to suppose or believe, that there were no other men but those herein named, that took on themselves the title of Emperor — perhaps there were more that assumed the purple & title of Caesar, who failed in the attempt on the Empire than there were of those who in some degree established themselves. the Names I now send you are only of those who were, on the whole, rather more fortunate, but those most successful had to wade through seas of blood to come at the throne, and were in their turn, often swept away in a torrent of blood, by a rival and successor.

My love to your honord, parents, your dear little sister, and your Cousine Polly Symmes.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

While I bid you most affectionately, adieu.

Jno C. Symmes

Masters John & Chs Short

[Addressed:] Masters John Cleves Short and Charles Wilkins Short at the Academy in Lexington Kentucky

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO  
JOHN CLEVES SHORT AND CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[*Short Family Papers,*]

Cincinnati, the 9th May 1804

My dear grandsons, I send you by your honord pah Kennets Roman antiquities that you may early make yourselves acquainted with the customs & manners of that great people, compared with whom neither France nor England can be named in point of importance — for in fact both france & England were only each of them a province of Rome, and sometimes both together made but one province of the Roman empire. Yet after all that can be said in favor of the ancient Romans, they were but a barbarous & savage people as is abundantly proved by the inhumane custom they had of making themselves past-time with gladiators who would cut, mangle, and kill each other to please their cruel masters and unfeeling spectators: The Grecians were a much more civilized people than the Romans; but perhaps not so war-like, for though they gained some great Victories over the Persians and other nations, I believe their success was more owing to the unwarlike and pusillanimous temper of their enemies than to their great skill and bravery in the field, for Philip, king of Macedon easily overcame them: and afterwards they fell an easy prey to the Roman Legions. Men and nations are only great, and little by being compared with nations still greater or less. A giant is said to be weak when contending with Hercules, but very strong when wrestling with common men — Greece was filled with many martial nations compared with the luxurious and timid people of the east where great effeminacy always did prevail, but when conflicting with the more fierce and ferocious Romans they were found no match for them. Alexander with his greeks & Macedonians easily

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

overran the eastern world, but the Romans with the same ease overcame both Grece and Macedon. and in their turn when the Romans themselves became enervated by Luxury & wealth, they fell a sacrifice to the ferocious barbarians of the North of Asia & Europe, less civilized, but more fierce. Ancient war was carried on & prospered best by the bodily strength and dexterity of the soldier, & being capable of enduring great hardships & fatigue, but modern war depends more on skill & discipline, the army now in use putting mankind more on a level in that respect. But after all, war is, & always was, a Curse to mankind, & it is a great pity that all mankind are not Quakers.

My dear Charles, if your talent lies in drawing there are some pieces which you may attempt to sketch out an imitation of, which you will find in Kennets antiquities, they are hard to imitate to besure, But you can attempt them, and by degrees you will improve your taste and correct your pencil, for the best painters of every age & nation could once draw no better than you now do. When you see your dear little sister Anna Maria tell her that grand-pah sends his kindest love to her and longs to see her, and hear her chatter and see her play. give also my best respects to your kind mah, and Cousine Polly Symmes.<sup>7</sup> I believe that I shall be over to see you all sometime this summer but cannot now name the time, there being a necessity of my attendance on the Commissioners while they are dividing the Reserved Township at Northbend. I expect that your Grand-mah Symmes will also be at your pabs house in the course of the summer on her way from Vincennes to Cincinnati where you will have an opportunity of seeing her. Your honord pah will hand you this. When you have leisure write me, & by keeping a letter ready written, you may frequently have opportunities of sending one to me.

Inform me when your next Vacation takes place, that I may contrive (if in my power) to bring you directly here from Lexington, that you may enjoy the whole vacation in Cincinnati.

<sup>7</sup>Peyton Short was married about 1803–1804 to Mrs. Jane Henry Churchill, a sister of John Cleves Symmes' second wife, Mrs. Mary Henry Halsey, Mary (Polly) Symmes, a daughter of Timothy Symmes, married Hugh Moore, a prosperous merchant of Cincinnati. McBride, *Pioneer Biography*, vol. II. p. 230; *Clarke Mss.* fo. 42, H.P.S.O.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

My dearest grandsons, farewell

Jno Cleves Symmes

Jno & Chs Short

[Addressed:] Masters Jno Cleves Short, and Charles Wilkins Short, Lexington, Kv Honord by their Pah.

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO JOHN CLEVES SHORT

[*Short Family Papers,*]

Cincinnati June 5th 1804.

My dear grandson, Yesterday I received a letter from your grandmah written at Vincennes on the 15th of May — informing me that the next day she should set out for Louisville & from Judge Sebastian<sup>8</sup> she expected that your pah would be so good as to send horses for her, and bring her to your pahs house — where I will meet her. Therefore I beg my son that as soon as your grand mah<sup>9</sup> arrives at your pahs you will write to me by the mail, and let me know of her arrival and I will come Immediately for her & Miss Livingston.<sup>10</sup> I shall bring three horses & one side-saddle. Perhaps your pah may be coming here sooner or before I can get word from you of your grand mahs arrival.

Present my best love to your grand mah, your pah, mah, Your brother Charles & dear little Anna, & to Your Cousine Polly and Miss Livingston — all of whom I hope shortly to have the pleasure to see in health.

adieu my dear grandson,

John C Symmes

Master Jno. C. Short.

<sup>8</sup>Doubtless Judge Benjamin Sebastian of the supreme court of Kentucky. He was accused of complicity with Aaron Burr and ultimately he resigned. Collins, *History of Kentucky*, Covington, 1874, vol. I, pp. 26, 281.

<sup>9</sup>Evidently Judge Symmes' mother-in-law, the mother of his second wife, Mary Henry Halsey, and also of Peyton Short's second wife.

<sup>10</sup>Jane Livingston, a younger sister of Mrs. Susan Symmes, who lived with her for a time. October 6, 1806, she was married to Joseph Delaplane, who carried on a "mercantile business" in Cincinnati. *Western Spy*, October 7, 1806.



## TO HIS GRANDSONS

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO  
JOHN CLEVES SHORT AND CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[*Short Family Papers,*]

August the 5th 1804 — Cincinnati.

My dear Grandsons,

I suppose Young Mr White informed you that Your Grand-mah had like to have been killed and Your cousine Polly had like to have broke her back, on the day we left your pah's by falls from each of their horses — but as no bones were broke we travelled on & the next day got to Mr Blackburns where Mr White left us & returned with your pahs two horses. We reached Mrs Clarks the second night, the third night we lodged at Alley's & came to Cincinnati by breakfast the next morning, found all well.

Your dear Grand-mah & myself has been for more than a week past, collecting the scattered remains of our household goods, and have so far succeeded as to be able to furnish the house at Peach Grove with comfortable, but not elegant accommodations, every thing is of the plainest, yet so that we shall be glad to see our friends at all times.

Mr Blackburn at Eagle-Creek charged your hon'd pah, Nine shilling's . 1½ dolr for keeping Mr Stewards horse & the hire of some other horse which Your pah loaned of him, and I sent twenty shillings Virginia money by young Mr White to deliver to your pah, which added to the nine shillings paid Mr Blackburn, makes the change of the guinea your pah gave me to defray Mr Whites expences on his return, what he spent in returning I know not. he can no doubt account to your pah for the twenty shillings — Please my dear grand-sons to give my kind regards to your honord pah & mah, & to Grand mah Henry if she has arrived at your mah's. kiss dear sweet sister Anna Maria for Grandpah & Grand-mah & tell her that Grand-mah & grand-pah longs to see her very much — Your kind grand-mah & your Cousine Jane sends as much love to you as the post boy can stow away in his portmanteau, & both send also their best respects to Your pah, mah, & grand-mah Henry if arrived.

## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

Your Cousine Polly is at her mahs, at Southbend where she will remain some time, but we expect Your Cousine Julia<sup>11</sup> up here tomorrow. She is to spend some time with Your grand mah. We have had no letters from Vincennes since our return — Master Charles, Your grand-mah wishes you to draw her another sleepey maid for the one you gave your grand-mah got spoiled by the sweat of the horse the girl rode on & dirtied her cloaths very much. Send the new picture by your pah the first of September.

Master John, You will do well to remind your pah to bring you home with him a pair of boots which I have had a long time for you & always forget to send them, prevail with your pah not to forget them when he comes.

Now my dear boys farewel, affectionately

Yours,

Master's J C S & C W S.

John C. Symmes

[Addressed:] Masters John Cleves Short, and Charles Wilkins Short. Lexington Kentucky —

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO JOHN CLEVES SHORT

[*Short Family Papers,*]

Cincinnati, October the 21st 1804

My dear Grandson,

I was happy in receiving your agreeable letter of the 9th Instant, wherein you promise me that you will promote Master Peytons information all you can. I fear he boasts of more than he can fulfil, tell him You will like him better if he will do more and brag less, the dog that does nothing but bark never catches the squirrel, — say little and think and do a great deal is the better way, in my opinion.

The disected map of Europe we have found, and when opportunity presents we will forward it to you, though it is only a meer puzzle-chart, that serves to amuse rather than Instruct, for to me

<sup>11</sup>Julia (Julianna Symmes), the daughter of Timothy Symmes, married Jeremiah Reeder. McBride, *Pioneer Biography*, vol. II, pp. 230–231.



## TO HIS GRANDSONS

a map on paper is better to gain information by, and the most successful way that I find in studying a map is to take a clean sheet of paper & set the point of your dividers in the centre of the sheet for the North pole, & put a short pen dipped in ink on the other point, & then sweep a number of Circles about one Inch apart, first leaving a considerable circle next the pole or centre to represent the arctic-circle. these several Circles are to represent the latitudes. In the space between the circles draw the lines of meridian diverging like rays from the pole or centre in strait lines to represent longitudes. there are 360 of these meridian Imaginary lines to go round the world from East to west parallel to each other, & in a right line North & south from pole to pole, but you can only continue them from your arctic circle across ten or twenty degrees of latitude. Now after you have got your latitudes & longitudes prepared, distinguish one from the rest & call it the meridian of London, as most of our geographical books & charts are calculated to that meridian, & not to our meridian of Philadelphia. When you have your sheet of paper thus prepared, spread open on the table before you some map or chart of the Northern hemisphere & with your pen write down the names of Cities & countries on your sheet in the same place as to latitude & longitude as you find them standing in the printed map before you, setting down in small letters & figures the latitude & longitude east or west of London, so that by the cast of your eye you gather at the same glance the name of the place or City & the latitude & longitude in which it stands on the globe — this practice will so incorporate the name of the Country the particular City & the latitude & longitude of such City in your remembrance that the four Ideas will become so associated that they will remain ever after inseparable. If you find yourself at a loss how to put this project into operation You will consult your teacher or your father who will Indulge you with farther explanation for which any paper is too scant. I forgot to mention in its proper place that your latitudes & longitudes must be numbered in the manner you will perceive them to be numbered in the map or chart from which you are extracting your remarks.

your good grandmah & Miss Livingston and all our friends here are well & send love to you & your brother Charles, dear little



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

sister Anna Maria & Master Peyton, who I hope will behave himself well in all points of view. his mah sisters & brothers are all well. Tell Master Charles, that Grandpah is very desirous of receiving a letter from him. Give my best love to Grand mah Henry & respects to your mah & pah —

So for this time I take my leave most affectionately Yours,

Jno C. Symmes

Master Jno C. Short.

[Addressed:] Master John Cleves Short Greefnfield [*sic*] Woodford County Kentucky Honord by Mr. Hanly

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO JOHN CLEVES SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

friday, Cincinnati, 28th 1804. December

My dear Grandson, the first thing we did this evening after our return from the Bend was to drive our cattle to deer-creek & back again, when I missed you exceedingly, and I fear it will be long before we go again together to drive cattle to deer-creek. I found all our friends well at the Bend, and on my return found all well here, for how could it be otherwise while Mr Delaplane has been here the whole long evening saying a thousand pretty things.

But tell me my dear grandson how you found all your friends on your return? Did you find grand-mah Henry & your mah well, and are your brother & little sisters well? and how is Peyton? tell him his mah is well and sends him a pair of socks by Mr Armstrong, his sister julia & brother Timmy are also well. they all send their love to Peyton, and to all the rest of your Pahs family. The Ice continues to run in the ohio in a tremendous manner, but we must hazard the horses to-morrow.

I have taken a very bad cold while abroad and find myself quite unwell this night.

You must have had a very unpleasant ride home with your honord pah. Cold and wet were your constant companions.

I beg my dear son, that you will present my best respects to Mah Henry and your Mah, and your dear brother Charles & sister

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

Anna Maria, tell Charles & Anna that grand-pah longs to see them but knows not when he shall. tell Peyton to be a good boy and love his book & I will love him.

I suppose your grand-mah Symmes & Miss Jane would [send their love to you] but they are both asleep long since.

Fare well my son for I am tired and sleepy also — write me by Mr Armstrong.

Your most affectionate

Master J C Short

Jno Cleves Symmes

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO JOHN CLEVES SHORT,  
PEYTON SHORT SYMMES AND  
CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

[Cincinnati, 1805]

My dear Grandson Charles Wilkins Short, As your Grand-pah likes to observe Oeconomy in every thing, he herein sets a small example of it by writing on this half sheet three letters, and having one fourth part of it left clean whereon to write the superscription. Oeconomy often works miracles and therefore should be much valued. I have known Oeconomy to bring the poorest families into a state of abundance. I have known boys by being the companions of Oeconomy to go always clean dressed, their garments whole, their shoes black & shining, their stockings always gartered up, their hands face and feet always clean, their hair sleek as silk, their attitude manly and stately, and they were much loved and esteemed. I have known many other boys who would have nothing to do with Oeconomy, if they got a sharp-shin in their pocket they immediately melted it into a pot of Cyder or a four penny dram, they never washed their faces hands nor feet, they would as soon run or creep through a thorn bush, or hedge or fence scratching tearing & dirtying their cloaths as not, their cloaths by this means hung all in rags about them like the fleece of a poor old ew in the spring. their hair always stood bristling every way like so many snakes creeping out of their empty Skulls, their shoes were always redish for want of grease, and muddy for want of cleaning, their



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

ragged stockings always about their legs, their garters being always lost, shoe-strings out or untied & of course their shoes always run down behind. when they passed along the streets they went sauntering or stood gazing at they know not what. every body who saw them laughed at and despised them. when they became men they would be either drunk, asleep, starving or begging, & all these calamities befell them for no other reason but because they were always quarrelling with Oeconomy. My dear Charles will therefore always listen to the voice of Oeconomy whose other name is wisdom, whose paths are pleasant and whose reward is peace.

Yours affectionately J C S

Your Grand mah and Aunt Symmes sends her love to all three of you and to, Your Pah, Mah, Grand mah Henry, and to all the dear Children. Miss Livingston begs her regards to all, and forget not to give my best respects to parents and grand-mah Henry, and kiss all the dear babes for Grand pah — perhaps I may see you all in the course of this summer as I contemplate a visit to your dear aunt Harrison & your little Cousins, and if I go will certainly call on you either going or coming, for I long to see you all exceedingly. We have nothing new, but the destruction on the Great Miami River. keep this letter Long and read it at least twice a year.

J C S

[Addressed:] Masters John Cleves Short, Peyton Short Symmes & Charles Wilkins Short. Honord by Mr Davidson

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO JOHN CLEVES SHORT

[*Short Family Papers,*]

Cincinnati, March 25th 1805

My dear grandson John Cleves Short — Having so good an opportunity of writing by Mr Davidson I cannot omit it, tho' I am quite unwell with a cold and can hardly set up while I write, I took a violent cold last week and have now a pain in my head & back and am very feverish, but still I keep about and attend to business. Ruth Price our cook has been sick for three weeks past with an

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

intermittent fever, and still is very low, the rest of the family are well. I hope your health is continued in firmness, and that your frame may prove constitutionally robust. In order to contribute all in your power to this end, and to make your body more strong and lusty, considerable exercise is necessary, not of the violent kind to be sure, such as wrestling, or heavy lifting by which persons are often much injured — but of those kinds of exercises whence no injury can accrue, you ought often to partake, such as walking, running on foot, riding, chopping for about half an hour at a time or hoeing in a garden for one hour. the more moderate the exercise the longer you may continue it, but playing ball against a battery ought to be avoided. I have known many hurt by it, causing spitting of blood and consumption, a game of ball played with cat-sticks is less dangerous, quoits or what the greeks called the discus is a harmless play. Among sedentary games, Checkers, or drafts, fox & gees, but above all the noble game of Chess. are the most eligible, they are entirely games of skill & judgment, & fickle chance has nothing to do in them, and besides, money is never hazarded at those games, but Cards, dice, back-gamon, Ho's, and all games of chance avoid as you would a pit of a volcano, for more young gentlemen have been engulfed by them, than ever was swallowed up by entering the craters of Etna & Vesuvius.

Yours affectionately      Jno Cleves Symmes

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO JOHN CLEVES SHORT

[*Short Family Papers,*]

January 1st 1806 — Cincinnati

My dear grandson,

At this place the day, the month and the year began with the roar of Cannon, the crashing of small arms, and the play of the boys on the Ice, the sun comes up smiling as tho' he partook of the general Joy, shines warm and pleasant, and no doubt will diffuse pleasure at greenfield.

I therefore wish you a happy new year, may a hundred of them if you wish to have so many, & please to present the compliments of the season to your good grand-mah Henry, your honored Mah,



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

and all the little ladies at Your pah's, as well as to my brisk master Charles, and philosophic Peyton. tell Peyton that his mah and all his brothers and sisters are well, his sister polly is married to Mr Hugh Moore and they live in the red house next to Mr Minesieur — there is little done in town this day but eating, drinking, shooting, jumping and dancing, visiting &c &c &c — When are you coming here my dear grand son? You will find us at North bend where we shall move bag and baggage in the spring — You must bring little Charles with you, and the next time dear little Anna Maria must come and see grandpah. I do not know when I shall be at greenfield, perhaps in going to or returning from Vincennes where I must go as soon as I can get there — give my kindest love to dear Charles and Dear little Anna Maria, I long to see them, You must write to me frequently by the mail. I would write you oftener than I do but I know not where to direct to you that my letters may find you. You must tell me where to direct them. Your pah sets out today, he has entered & secured a vast quantity of land — When do you enter College and to what college do you go? prevail with your pah to send you to Princeton if you can. You will be pleased with the place and with the people and will meet with hundreds who are acquainted with your grand-pah.

Your grandmah & Miss Jane send their best love to all the family

my son adieu

Jno C. Symmes

J C Short

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO JOHN CLEVES SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Cincinnati, August the 15th 1806.

My very dear grandson,

I have long been some letters in your debt. I now sit down to make you a remittance of one, for which I hope you will give me credit in our general account — You will find the present letter not a very entertaining one, but it may serve to inform you that I am in very excellent health, and so are your grand mah and Jane, as

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

well as all your relation on this side of the Ohio. There has been a great deal of marching and countermarching, wheeling sometimes to the right and suddenly filing off to the left, advancing with quick step as tho' a charge was unavoidable, then suddenly halting in order to effect a retrograde manuvre, abundance of loose firing at long shots, both in field and bush fighting, but no decisive engagement as yet has taken place between General Delaplane and the warlike amazon, this conflict it is expected will take place in October, soon after which both armies are to decamp, and march with all possible expedition to New York, where they are to go into winter quarters, until the season for opening the next campaign arrives, when both commanders are to repair to their present fortresses, in order to go on with further military projects.<sup>12</sup> some conjecture that the old fort is to be dismantled, and all the ordinance and military stores removed to the new fort now erecting on main street, where it is expected that the cannonading will soon commence and only be discontinued by the death of one of the commanders. So much of the wars [blank] This week the new theatre was opened in this town,<sup>13</sup> [blank] been entertained two nights already. The dramatic characters [blank] I have knowledge, were General Findly, Major Killgore, [blank], Mr Rollin, Doctr Stall, Mr Totten, Mr Mansfield, Mr [Cunningam], Mr McClellan, Mr Gano, and three or four others whom I did not know on the stage, but unacquainted as the gentlemen were with [the] business of a stage they performed to admiration — the benefit is for the [Corporation] of the Town, about an hundred dollars were collected each night.

The drought that has prevailed at Northbend since the first of may last is at length broken, we have had several fine rains, nature again begins to laugh and sing, vines of all kinds wanton in luxuriance, and tho' our corn has suffered a sad reve[rse] yet we begin to hope, that from the treaty which has lately taken place

<sup>12</sup>This burlesque, in Judge Symmes' best satirical style, doubtless refers to the engagement and marriage of his sister-in-law, Jane Livingston. Cf., *ante*, p. 14, (note 10.)

<sup>13</sup>The "new theatre" occupied the most spacious room in town, over Vattier's stable. The players, calling themselves the Thespians, included many of the leading citizens. Chas. T. Greve, *Centennial History of Cincinnati*, vol. I, Chicago, 1904, pp. 467-468, and *passim*.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

between heaven and earth, will result to the industrious farmer about half a crop.

Nothing would give me more pleasure my dear grandson, than to see you and your dear brother Charles and my darling little Anna Maria, that I might feast my eyes with the observation of your approaching manhood — with the ingenious guidance of Charles' pencil, and my ears gratified with the sprightly prattle of her thed needle and yags of my charming little Anna Maria. Fail not my son to give my kind and tenderest affection to both of them, you must not suffer either of them to forget their grandpah who loves them, and holds them in his constant remembrance. Be pleased also to present my best regards to dear Mother Henry and to your much honord, Pah and Mah, and love to Master Peyton, by whom when he comes to us, you, your brother, and sweet Anna must write me long letters. To your little sister you will be so good [to act as] her secretary.

Master John Cleves Short.

Yours affectionately  
John Cleves Symmes

### JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO JOHN CLEVES SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Cleves, August the 3rd 1807.

My dearest grandson,

Your kind favor of the 17th of May, lies as yet on my table unacknowledged — You will know my son, how to appreciate this neglect of Your grand-pah, who has no other object before him in life, than to render his dear grand-children, respectable, wealthy, and happy. You may have heard, nay your own years, though few, may have taught, that what we meet with every day sinks in its value in our estimation, on the contrary, what is rare is generally esteemed, hence to us the superior excellence of the orange over the apple. Ask the opinion of one who is burning between the tropics, to which he gives the preference, he will not hesitate a moment to answer “to the apple” In this principle is founded the morral of the Sybel-leaves of which we read in roman story, as their numbers lessened, their value rose — The human mind, when chained to one object and suffered to make no Ex-cursions on other subjects, will satiate, and curiosity is discouraged and cowed. It is now about seventy days since I had the pleasure of

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

reading your letter, put the case, that I had addressed a line to you every day since I received Yours, would you have read the half, or would you now read this? they must have become cheap on your hands for two reasons — first, their postage would have exceeded their value — 2ndly, it is a never failing truth, that he who writes or chatters much, writes and talks much nonsense. So much by way of apology for neglecting you so long.

It would be extremely gratifying to me my dear grandson if I might be favored with your company at this season of the year, when the woods are adorned with leaves and the earth with herbs and grass. Three weeks have the labourers of Northbend been engaged in gathering in their harvest of hay, wheat &c &c, nor have they yet finished their toil. we have had great growths of every kind of production the earth affords. the season has been wet without a parallel, but whether our wheat will yield so well from the shock as in some years is to me doubtful. the fly, and too much wet I believe has injured it considerably.

We have at length the privilege of a ghrist-mill at our door. Capt Rittenhouse has one running at the place where he had raised his saw-mill when you was here in the winter, we find it very convenient for this neighborhood. Our Court begins at Cincinnati tomorrow. I believe I shall go up in the morning. I lately received a letter from your aunt Harrison, they are well at Vincennes except that your aunt is troubled with sore eyes.

Where is my dear Charles, and my blooming Anna Maria. I long to see you all, but when I shall be able to leave home is very uncertain. I have great cares on my mind & labors on my hands, in the line of husbandry; many hands at work, and no body in door nor out that I can fully confide in. I must be first up and the last to bed every day of my life, or all is motionless, and nothing done as it ought to be.

Please to give my kindest regards to Your pah, mah, and grandmah Henry, and my most affectionate love to dear Charles and sweet Anna Maria and write me when you set out for Princeton

Your affectionate Grandpah

John Cleves Symmes

Master John C. Short



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

[Postscript]

Some vile incendiary about midnight on the 20th of June set fire to my carriage and cornhouse and consumed it to ashes.<sup>14</sup> It was with difficulty that we saved the house and barn from burning. On the evening of the 25th of June my barn was set on fire just at dusk, but as I had a number of men at work for me that day, by good fortune we saved it by quenching out the flames. I have no doubt in my own mind that some of Rennos family set both on fire, as they had threatened that my barn would be burned because I had turned them off my land, and had arrested the old man for near an hundred dollars which he has owed me these seven Years, and the very next week after the arrest, the fires were set to my Coach house and barn. Whether I shall be able to get them punished or not I cannot say, but I intend to complain to the grand jury this present Court, for which purpose I am now at Cincinnati the 7th of August 1807. All Your relations at this place sends their best regards to you — write me my son as soon as you can, and oblige Your loving grand pah. John Cleves Symmes

[Addressed:] Master John Cleves Short Greenfield Woodford-County Kentucky

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO JOHN CLEVES SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Cleves, May 21st — 1808

My dear grandson,

Your melancholy letter of the 8th Instant, I this moment with sorrow received, & claim the privilege of adding one to the number of sincere mourners on the solemn occasion of the death of a friend, and so kind a sister, as was your late deceased mother, in whose pleasant company I have so often been greatly delighted.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Fires were frequent in the scattered homesteads of the pioneers. Also, Judge Symmes was the frequent victim of incendiaries. Cf. John Cleves Symmes to Peyton Short, March 17, 1800, *post*, p. 60, and to John Cleves Short, March 3, 1811, *Symmes Correspondence*, Bond, ed., pp. 301-303.

<sup>15</sup>Mrs. Jane Henry Churchill Short, Peyton Short's second wife and Judge Symmes' sister-in-law, died May 3, 1808. Evidently she had endeared herself to her three step-children, for John Cleves Short, comparing her to his own mother, declared, "She was the same as your departed daughter — her image is all that's virtuous, good and amiable." John Cleves Short to John Cleves Symmes, May 8, 1808, copy of original, through courtesy of Roy G. Fitzgerald, Esq. of Dayton, Ohio.

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

I, from my soul, condole in the deepest sympathy with Your honored pah, my aged and distressed mother Henry, yourself and all the other afflicted motherless children of the deceased. But let us all not forget that while God gives and takes away at pleasure, it is never the less our duty unceasingly to bless his holy name. We should always take into consideration that though the Almighty deprives us of some valuable comforts at will, Yet he still continues to spare many others to us which he might justly reclaim.

Present my kindest regards to My much respected friends, Mother Henry and your pah, and my love to your dear brother & sisters. tell master Charles that he is running himself greatly in debt to his grandpah, as he already owes him a whole quire of paper written in letters, & had better begin to make remittances, lest I dispatch Mercury after him to bring him forthwith in personam, to answer for his negligence — I enjoy a tolerable share of health, though lately afflicted with a bad cold & cough —

This day I received a letter from your aunt Harrison, another from your cousine Betsey Harrison dated the 12th April last. Betsey complains that it is long since she has heard from her cousines in Kentucky surely sir, you will not give her another occasion of complaint of the kind. they are all well at Vincennes.

I remain most affectionately,  
my dear grandson, Your loving grandpah

John C. Symmes

Master Jno C. Short.

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[O.H.S.Mss.]

Cincinnati 9th August 1808.

My dear Charles. I thank you for your favor by your brother John — still more for the promise you make me of a visit this fall — but will thank you most of all for making your promise good, when your honord pah returns again to this country — besure that you come, and not only come, but tarry some weeks or months when here. I think I can make your visit very pleasant to you —



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

you will make no sacrifice of apples, peaches, plums, for we have plenty.

I want you to draw me some maps for which you are so well qualified, and in return I will teach you the art of surveying — I have a good compass and chain, and scale & dividers of which I wish to teach you the Use, and help you in the practice. I have a great many corn fields to measure this fall, as tenants pay rent by the acre and this service will be pretty amusement and instruction for you while with me . so that your pah need suffer no regret at the loss of your time from school, as a little of the mathematic's will not injure your studies of the languages, but rather whet your appetite for them. I think it will be a little hard for you and your brother to part when he sets out for Princeton, but you must neither of you suffer yourselves to be dejected. You will both remain within the reach of communication by the mail. write me soon and bring the letter yourself to your most

affectionate grandpah

Master Chs. Short.

John Cleves Symmes

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[*O.H.S.Mss.*]

Cincinnati, 22nd of february 1809.

My dear grandson Charles —

I came to this town six days ago, in exceeding good health, tho' I had cold weather and bad roads to gang through all the way — I thank you my grandson for the kind letter which you lately wrote to me, and am happy that by it I learn that your honord pah and grand mah, and all your little sisters are well — Last week I received a letter from your good brother John dated at Princeton the 1st day of this month. he writes that he is well and wishes that you was at College with him. I hope that in the course of another year you will go.

My dear Charles, I have got your long letter copied fair, and only wait for a good opportunity to forward it to you free of expence, for it will cost too much to send it by the mail — I trust that I shall have some opportunity to send it free.

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

My son, in your next letter to grandpah, I beg you will write, if you do remember, where you left the two chizels that you had put long handles to, in order to trim grandpahs apple trees with, for neither I nor Noah can find one of them. One was wide the other narrow, but neither has been seen since you and Noah had them in the garden.

The winter has been so cold, and withall so rainy that I have been most of the time close in my chamber, If you had spent the winter with grand pah, I would have had you so far master of the nautical art, that you would have been able to have navigated a first rate man of war to the east indies.

We have had dreadful high freshets in the Ohio, the River has not been so high in fifteen years before. great numbers of stock of all kinds have been drowned, & many miles of fence destroyd all our mills nearly ruined, and bottom flowd, lands reduced one half in their nominal value. Write soon to grandpah — and give my best respects to your pah and grandmah Henry, and love to dear little Anna Maria, tell her grandpah longs to see her, but knows not when he shall be able to come.

Cleves, the 8th of March, 1809.

My dear grandson.

The foregoing part of this letter, I wrote while at Cincinnati, two weeks ago, but not having leisure to fill my sheet while at Cinti., I whirled up what I had written with many other papers and brought them home, where it has not presented itself to my view until this day — and lest it should again stray from me, I will finish it, and make out its passport, especially, as by your kind letter of the 31st of January last, which came to my hand six days ago, you remind me of my promise to write often to you — I hope my dear Charles that you will make much allowance to your grandpah, when you consider that he has every thing to do, and no body to help him. In what I wrote at Cinti I mentioned the high waters of the Ohio and other rivers, at this moment there is another flood in the Ohio & smaller rivers, the Ohio now bounds over its banks, driving man and beast from their habitations; four times this winter has Garret Vanblarricum At the mouth of the great Miami,



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

been surrounded with water, and driven out of his house, in which the water rose to the top of the front door. Many other tenants at the Point have been routed out of their cabins and lost their corn, Our rails for more than two miles have floated and destroyed that length of fence, the rails are driven in heaps among drift wood, or floated quite off. One grist-mill came floating down the Ohio, with the Irons, stones, & bags of grain in her, Mr North the ferryman with his sons boarded her, and took out the Irons and stones — Lawrenceburgh has been several times abandoned, while catfish and perch took possession of their parlours and cellars, feeding deliciously on the juncates and sweet-meats of the lords of creation. In fact, we have had a perspective view of Noah's flood in miniature, man and beast, all, all flying for life to the ark of safety, the high hills — while others less fortunate, have been as completely drowned, as tho' the waters had been over the highest hills forty cubits and upwards. had it not been that I happened to spy the pledged bow in the heavens, I should have forthwith embarked on board my canoe with an hundred and forty four days provisions on board. But what are we the better here for escaping the flood? one may as well be drowned as starve to death. we can get no grinding done in the first place — and therefore have been obliged to eat potatoes enough to make me an Irishman, and while I had flour, I had no woman to make it up into light bread, therefore lived on unleavened cakes long enough to make me a jew. Our mills are all broke, and my cook's husband has taken his wife home, Mr Ross the mason, Noah and myself keep house together — I will give you an epitome of our mode of living. At day break I halloo them up — they rise & make the fire — Noah hangs on the tea-kettle — Ross cuts and fries the bacon, then heshes up the potatoes in the gravy of the bacon, while Noah is boiling the eggs, I am kneeding a cake to roast in a pan before the fire. Ross sets the table & spreads the fare upon it — I make the tea — our breakfast is ready — and for want of a petty-coat to grace the board, it falls to me to do the honors of the table. and for want of a parson we are obliged to eat our potatoes in unthankfulness. I have already mentioned my son, that my long letter to you is copied and ready for you, but it fills so many sheets that the expence will

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

come too high to forward it by the mail — a private conveyance, I hope will present, before a great while.

I lately received a letter from your Uncle Harrison, he writes that he has been dangerously ill, but is now recovering. — Your aunt Anna is well, and so are all your little cousins, the four eldest go to school — All our friends in Northbend and Cinti are well; Timothy<sup>16</sup> lives now with Mr Moore at the mills. No man is more favored with health than I am. In the morning I can walk six miles to the point, do a days work there, and walk home again at night. altho' I shall be sixty seven years old if I live to the 21st day of July next. Your great, great grandfather Cleves died when he was sixty four, but your great, great grand-mother Cleves lived until she was in her ninetyeth year. I remember well, your great, great, great grand mother Halliock, mother of your great, great grandmother Cleves. — the grandfather of your great, great, great grand mother Hallioc was among the first white men who came from England and settled at the east end of Long Island, on a neck of land, and his farm to this day is known by the name of Halliocks neck, and to this day are the pits seen where he had his cellars, and the stones yet in heaps, the ruins of [his] chimneys. Hallowed spot of earth! were it mine I would not exchange it for a kingdom. so much [do] I venerate my ancestors, of whose worthy deeds, [had] I leisure, I would write a volume. When I go into the graveyard at the old church in the older town of Southold and read the inscriptions on the multitudes of monumental stones with which the cemetery is over-spread, I can trace out scores of our blood-relation, of almost every name and degree, whose sacred ashes lie mingled with the dust of that famd Island, in which I drew my first breath.

I cannot easily conceive of any tour that would be equally gratifying to me, as it would to take my three eldest grandsons and go with them to New Jersey, New York & Long Island, and point out to them where their grandfather was born, where he was raised, where he received his education, where he married your grand mother, where he began his career, the several habitations where he

<sup>16</sup>Timothy Symmes, son of Judge Symmes' brother, settled at North Bend. McBride, *Pioneer Biography*, vol. II, p. 232.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

lived, the house of your ever dear mothers birth, the multiplied graves of your ancestors explaining & pointing out to my three grandsons, the site, the time, the occasion, the exploit, and the result, of some of the most remarkable transactions of their ancestors, and the collateral relations of their venerable progenitors. from the east end of Long Island I would cross over to New London, a seaport of Connecticut, and pass on through the small state of Rhode Island, to Boston in Massachusetts, in which state the Symmes's are numerous, I would visit Charles-town where our first american ancestor of the name of Symmes, long presided as the pastor, and teacher of the first church ever founded in New England,<sup>17</sup> — hence Charlestown has been for ages past called the mother of Boston, in as much as the first founders of the town of Boston migrated from Charlestown. This town was honored with the christian name of the then Prince of Wales, eldest son of James the first — but alas, both town and patron were alike unfortunate in civil wars. in the civil war of 1649 Charles lost his head, and in the uncivil war of 1775 Charles town was burnt. hence we perceive the truth of what we read in the bible, viz. that God punishes or “visits the iniquity of the fathers upon their children, to the third and fourth generation” The puritans cut off the head of king Charles. at the restoration of his son, most of the regicides fled to New England for safety from the vengeance of Chs the second — 126. Years afterwards, the descendants of those puritans are persecuted by a british king, thousands of those whose veins flowed with puritanic blood were slain, and their towns and Cities burned.

From Charlestown, I would conduct my three grandsons to Cambridge, that ancient site of Harvard College, where many, very many of our kindred of varying names have been educated. In particular, six of the name of Symmes stand immortalized on the catalogue of the graduates from that venerable alma mater, all of whom in their day have proved themselves ornaments of the pulpit and the bar. From Cambridge I would proceed to New Hampshire where the Cleves once flourished, from New Hampshire came my great grandfather Cleves to Southold on Long Island & married a

<sup>17</sup>Rev. Zechariah Symmes, born at Canterbury, England, in 1599, came to New England in 1634 and was pastor of the church at Charlestown until his death in 1671. *Ibid.*, p. 225.

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

Miss Halliock, grand daughter to the first Halliock, hence it was that my grandfather & grandmother Cleves were first cousins before their marriage. Your great, great, great grandmother Hallioc, and the oldest of our progenitors that I have seen and well remember, was a Miss Horton before her marriage with Hallioc.

Thus much of our familiarum origo may suffice for the present, perhaps in my next, I may wheel about in New Hamshire, and bring my three grandsons home to their native regions of the west.

I remain my darling boy most affectionately yours.

John C. Symmes.

[Addressed:] Master Charles W. Short, Lexington, Kentucky

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[*O.H.S. Mss.*]

Cleves, November the 7th 1809.

My dear grandson Charles, having had the pleasure of the company of your good Uncle Doctor Rigely for a few days, I cannot let pass so good an opportunity of writing to you without availing myself of it, and the rather as you most undoubtedly must feel yourself much afflicted at the so sudden and unexpected absence of your dear father, which leaves you and your dear little sisters, for the term of his absence, without a parent.<sup>18</sup> Yet my dear grandson, however dark and intricate the ways of heaven may appear unto you, you must not lose your spirits and fortitude, confide with unlimited confidence in an allwise and all merciful providence that will most assuredly provide for you and your little sisters, even though you were abandoned by all your friends, but be thankful to a kind God, that this is not yet your case. You still have your two very good and worthy Uncles Doctor Ridgely and Mr Charles

<sup>18</sup>Confronted by financial ruin after the death of his second wife, Peyton Short left for Mississippi Territory, hoping to recoup his fortune by speculation in land. *H.P.S.O. Quarterly*, vol. V, no. 1, pp. 3-20.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

Wilkins,<sup>19</sup> in whom I repose full assurance that they will do all they can to insure your present support, and provide for your future interest and happiness, and should it please god to extend my life a few years longer, I hope to have it in my power to secure to you a handsome establishment in the world, this I have done for many who were not at all related to me, or if related it was but remotely and surely a beneficent providence that has enabled me to make provision for many another man, will not desert me in my efforts to settle all my dear grandchildren in such a manner, that with application to business, and oeconomy, there can be no danger of obtaining, not only a tolerable, but an elegant situation through life for all my dear grand children. You will therefore my dear Charles, consider yourself, not only in duty, but by your best interest, bound to obey and please your two good Uncles during the absence of your father, and even to the finishing of your college-education. If I shall live to that day, I shall then expect you to fly immediately to me. I have many precepts of oeconomy and industry to teach you, which you may find of the greatest service to you through life, but which can never be acquired otherwise, or in any other place than by practical lessons, on a large farm, adapted both for agriculture and stock, and which none can teach but a regularly bred farmer, and altho' the chance is against me on the score of age, yet if I may be allowed to flatter myself with the hope of my life being a while longer preserved, from the circumstances of my confirmed good health, and unabating strength and activity, I presume to hope that I may yet live, (fatal accidents apart) to see you, your brother John & sister Anna all comfortably provided for and settled for life.

But in the mean time my dear grandson, give all deligence to acquire a complete education, let none out shine you in the paths of learning, be temperate, studious, and dutiful, attentive to your teachers, submissive, cool and composed in your temper, let no trifling occasion of offence move your irritable passions, be always

<sup>19</sup>Dr. Frederick Ridgely, one of the founders of the medical college at Transylvania University, came to Lexington in 1780. Charles Wilkins was a prosperous merchant in Lexington, and he and Dr. Ridgely each married a sister of Peyton Short. G. W. Ranck, *History of Lexington*, Cincinnati 1872, p. 44; Charles R. Staples, *History of Pioneer Lexington*, Lexington, 1939, pp. 206, 213, etc.

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

calm in your passions, & your sure reward will be a serene mind, tranquil and at ease.

When it shall meet with the approbation of your two worthy uncles, endeavor to make me a visit, and spend a month or more with your old grandpah but in the mean time write frequently to me Please to present my kindest regards to my good and much honord mother Henry. and my warmest love to my dear grand daughters Betsey and Anna Maria and to your pretty little sisters that are younger, whose names I know not — and also to Misses Mary Churchill<sup>20</sup> and Catherine Wilson, and compliments to all my worthy acquaintance Your aunts & Your Uncle Wilkinson [Wilkins]. I now conclude, as the Doctor and Miss Mires, are ready to ride.

Be my dear grandson, what your grandpah wis[h]es you to be and justify in him that hope that is so much cherished in the bosom of

Your very affectionate grandpah

John Cleves Symmes

Master Charles Short..

[Addressed:] Master C. W. Short Lexington Honord by Doctr Ridgely

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[O.H.S. Mss.]

Cleves, 23rd february 1810

My dear grandson,

Yesterday I had the pleasure of receiving Your favor of the 4th instant. I thank you that you availed yourself of the fair opportunity of writing by Capt Symmes.

It is with the greatest grief that I read in your letter the helpless situation in which your dear brother is at Princeton. in your relation of his forlorn condition, You discover much sympathy and great affection with and for him. and I believe he is not without

<sup>20</sup>Mary Churchill, daughter of Mrs. Jane Henry Churchill Short, eventually married her stepbrother, Charles Wilkins Short.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

the pity of all his relation; from my soul I lament that he was ever sent abroad to be subjected to want and the keen mortification which he must most sensibly feel at his fathers imprudence in sending him to Princeton, on the eve of his fathers reverse of fortune, for your father must have been apprised of his approaching ruin long before your poor brother was banished from all his friends and beyond their assistance and what extremely aggravates his fathers cruelty towards him is, that his father first deprived John of the only probable means of support from the rents of the land that really belonged to John, and then sent him to starve in that very country where his son could have been amply supported by the income of his own estate without one shilling expence to his father. But since poor John is plunged into the calamity in which he is placed, all I can do for him immediately, is to bring him out of exile as soon as possible, for it is not my wish that he should continue one day longer at Princeton, that hot bed of federalism, or rather toryism, where for every step he advances in knowledge I believe he will retrograde three towards the principles of aristocracy, the president and professors being federalists to a man, as is also Col Henry, John's only friend and patron.

If your honored Uncles Doctor Ridgely and Mr Wilkins will grant their approbation of the measure, I will soon make the attempt to bring him home. And all considerations of his want of money out of the question, I had much rather have him under my immediate care and instruction, than that he should remain another session at College, even though the president would furnish his board and tuition gratis, for besides that I think the time really lost that he spends in turning over any other books than those of law. I wish to have him every few weeks with me, at my table, over my farm, receiving my advice and instruction, teaching him oeconomy, industry, and the practical parts of life, mere theory goes but little way towards making the pot boil. If your Uncles will let me have John and you too, I will, please god that I live a few years longer, put your future lives in train, and mark out paths, wherein if you will persevere, you both may in time repair the waste and havoc which your father has made in your maternal fortunes; but this is too wide a breach to be closed up suddenly.

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

I wish to put Your dear brother immediately in Mr Glovers or Mr Burnets office.<sup>21</sup> I can readily pay the customary fee in land or horses (for there is no money passing here) I can quarterly discharge Johns board with the produce of my farm, and his cloathing I can procure of the merchants for wheat & whisky. In four years or perhaps in shorter time he may appear to advantage at the bar, and I have a very valuable law-library at his service which I have preserved many years for him — he can then live and live respectably. but his tarry at Princeton ever so long, will not advance his prospects of living to greater advantage. Nay, I have often observed that a kind of mental rust is contracted within the damp walls of a college which the longest life of the mere student is not long enough to rubb off & burnish to splendor. Many of the greatest men of our day, have not had a collegiate education, a man must make himself, or he will never be more than half man, not to travel out of the state of Ohio where it is probable you & your brother will make your first appearance on the stage of active life. I can name some of our first characters who have not had a regular classic education. Mr Glover the best lawyer in the state. Mr St Clair, Mr Crane, Mr Cory, Mr Longworth, Mr Wade, Mr Beecher, Mr McClean, Mr Brian, Mr Freeman, and several others among the lawyers, have never been immured a moment, within college walls, and yet are doing tolerably well in the practice of the law. among gentlemen who are and have been on the bench of our supreme court we find Scott, Todd, Peas, Dunlavy, Brown, Morris, Gilman, Putman, and some others who have had the honor of presiding in our highest courts, who never graduated at a college. If we enquire among gentlemen who are so fortunate as to obtain the fairest salaries in the state, we find not a single character in four land offices in the pay of the United States who have been even admitted a freshman in a college, and yet these eight gentlemen enjoy an income of from one to three thousand dollars per annum, according to the extent of business transacted in their sev-

<sup>21</sup>Elias Glover was a man of "superior talents," according to his obituary who conducted himself "with laudable zeal and the strictest honor and integrity." *Western Spy*, October 12, 1811. Jacob Burnet was the acknowledged leader of the Cincinnati bar. *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. III, New York, 1929, p. 294.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

eral offices. John must be a lawyer, ——— but what I shall make of you my dear grandson, I can better decide when you come to live with me. Law, physic and commerce are open before you, and while I live I can aid you in either which you may prefer, but I am already an old man, cannot live much longer, and wish to form you & your brother to business before I die. tell dear Anna she must hasten her letter to Grandpah, for as yet she has never sent him one. Yours, affectionately Jno C Symmes.

Master Chs Short.

My dear grandson, I am requested by a son of Mr O Ferral<sup>22</sup> a merchant in Cincinnati, to enquire of you what the expence will be to his father, if he, the lad about your age, should come to Lexington academy to school? what will be his board & washing per week? what will be his tuition money or fee, per quarter? and what will be his extra expences per month? pray my dear grandson write and answer me as to the foregoing questions.

[Addressed:] Master, Charles W. Short. Lexington, Kentucky.

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[*Ind. Hist. Soc. Mss.*]

Cincinnati, April the 9th 1810.

My dear Charles, A few weeks ago I wrote to Doctor Ridgely and to you, but as yet have not been informed of your receipt of my letters. the chief subject of both letters was, what can or ought to be done for the present and lasting interest of yourself and your dear brother John? Sensible that your friends in Lexington have the welfare of both of you as much at heart as is possible for the best of men to have. Yet I fear that perhaps we may not perfectly agree as to the measures that are to be pursued in future in order to qualify both of you to make your own way good through the world. I know that it is the ardent wish of both your uncles to make both of you respectable men and intelligent worthy citizens,

<sup>22</sup>At his book-store, John O. Ferral in addition to a long list of law books, offered a "great variety" of "religious, historical and miscellaneous publications." *Western Spy*, October 7, 1806, and August 28, 1808.

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

to prepare you to set out fair to make fortunes, or at least an independency, that will place you through life in very easy circumstances. this I think is still in our power to do notwithstanding your fathers misfortunes. You have both some lands in this state which I long since made sure to you, but these can be of little Use to you until they are planted with tenants, when after a few years they may become productive and afford considerable rent. but these rents will not be sufficient alone to support a family in a style of life that is called decent. You must both have professions of some kind and the sooner you are placed in the way of acquiring them, the better. I wish you were both at this moment with me that I might form my own opinion of your respective talents and inclinations, that I might put opportunities in your way of making yourselves acquainted with the country and the more respectable part of the inhabitants thereof. The case is already decided that you must both settle on this side of the Ohio. You cannot live in Kentucky reputably without negroes. here you will need none, they are a curse here to the master. the lowbred whites are always conspiring with the black to rob their owner, here a man may feed and saddle his own horse without danger of loosing either his bride or his election, or may go from the bench of the supreme court to his woodpile, chop his wood and make his own fire, without danger of having his legal judgments set aside as vulgar errors. I shall be much gratified if your two good Uncles could send you shortly over to me. and when they can prevail on themselves to consent that John may come home I will do my endeavor to bring him home as soon as it can be done. It is time that he was placed at his study of the law, I had much rather that he should be no lawyer, than that he should figure as one only of the second grade — let him be a first rate lawyer, or let him be a farmer. he has no time to lose —. the bar is already crowded with men who call themselves lawyers, but such are the greater number that they can boast none of the attributes of a lawyer but the name. what is to be your pursuit in life we are yet to advise on. make up your own mind on the question, and your friends will no doubt second your views. Yet I think you may spare a year or two in assisting me in my wide-spread business of surveying, writing, travelling and collecting



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

debts & rents. by this means you will become better acquainted with my business than any other of my relation. Be pleased my son to present my best respects to Doctor Ridgely and Mr Wilkins, and to your good aunts their wives — make my kindest love to your dear sister Anna Maria. I lately wrote her a letter, I hope both you and your sister will write me again quickly. by the present mail I have written to your dear cousin Betsey B. Harrison. to whom you will also present my kind love.

I would have written also to Doctor Ridgely on your fathers affairs in this state, but have no new observations to make on them — the time is now come when we shall soon see what measures will be pursued by Mr Stanley — If I could make any practicable terms with him I would purchase in his judgment. I intend to start a proposition to him however, but I have not very sanguine hopes of success, nothing but ready money answers the arrangements of merchants. If any thing else would do, perhaps I might succeed.

Do try my dear grandson to come over to me — Your good Uncles can spare you — their families are sufficiently encumbered with your fathers family without you, and I have not a soul in my family in whom I have confidence as I would wish to have — they are all strangers, and no way interested in my prosperity. for the present farewell

Master Chs W. Short

Your very affectionate grandpah.

John Cleves Symmes

[Addressed:] Master Charles W. Short Lexington, Kentucky.

JAMES CLEVES SYMMES TO COLONEL JAMES HENRY<sup>23</sup>

[*From original owned by Roy G. Fitzgerald, Esq., Dayton, Ohio*]

Cincinnati, April the 12th, 1810.

To Colonel James Henry of New Jersey.

My dear Sir, as my grandson John Cleves Short is in the vicinity of Princeton in your State, and he as well as myself are

<sup>23</sup>Colonel James Henry, a prominent resident of Somerset County, New Jersey, was a brother of Judge Symmes' second wife and also of John Cleves Short's stepmother, Mrs. Jane Henry Churchill Short. *N. J. Historical Society Proceedings*, new series, vol. V, p. 231; Speed, *Political Club of Kentucky*, p. 79.

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

desirous of his returning home as soon as he can prepare for his journey, I beg leave Sir, to solicit that your advice and assistance may be afforded to him to that object. Be pleased therefore Sir, to arrange with him the manner in which he may most conveniently, and least expensively return to this place; and be so good Sir as to furnish him with money sufficient to clear off and discharge all his debts in New Jersey — to prepare and fit him for his journey — and to defray his expenses from Princeton to this town. And to these objects be pleased to apply any of my funds or monies now in your hands, or which you may be able to collect either from the rents of my small place at Solitude, or from the sale of my houses and lands at Solitude in the County of Morris. And whatever sum or sums of money you may find necessary to furnish my grandson with, be pleased to reimburse yourself out of the rents or the proceeds of the sale of Solitude, for which purpose I enclose you a power of attorney to sell Solitude to the best advantage you can.

Be so good Sir, as to write me from time to time, and let me know what success you meet with, but the great object is to have my grandson restored to me as speedily as possible, for I am greatly anxious to have the youth under my immediate control and advice for the next four or five years, if it please God that I live so long.

With much esteem, I remain your humble servant

John Cleves Symmes

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[*O.H.S. Mss.*]

Cincinnati, 15th April 1810.

My dear grandson Charles,

Master Andrew O Ferral the young gentleman who will hand you these lines, is the same person of whom I wrote you a few weeks ago, & who now comes to enter himself in the Lexington Seminary in order to finish his education. It is my request my son, that you will take Mr O Ferral by the hand as a favorite companion, and



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

introduce him to all your worthy acquaintance in Lexington. I think you must be nearly of the same age with him, and I make no doubt but you will soon be pleased with each other, and form habits of intimate friendship. Let there never be any other strife between you, than the pleasant emulation of, who shall acquire knowledge most rappidly.

Mr O Ferral is the son of a respectable merchant of this town, who three or four years ago, removed from Virginia to this place. I assure myself that every service which is in your power to render young Mr O Ferral will be most cheerfully given by you. Mr O Ferral in his turn may be of much avail to you, when you make us a visit in company with Master O Ferral at the next vacation.

I wrote you last week, my dear Charles, that I wanted you to come & live with me. I now release you of this call, as your brother John will soon return to this country, and I hope live altogether with me. he can improve himself by reading law at the same time that he affords me much assistance in the line of my business, by superintending the concerns of my tenants, and relieving me of the task of drawing so many writings as I am daily obliged to do.

do not neglect to write soon to Your most  
affectionate grandfather.

John Cleves Symmes.

Master Charles Wilkins Short.

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[*O.H.S. Mss.*]

Cleves, 3rd july 1810.

My dear grandson, Charles W. Short:

Having so fair an oppertunity to write you, as well as to your dear cousine Betsey B. Harrison, and your still dearer sister Anna Maria, I must embrace it. Your last letter to me is of the date 10th of May, which I received the 24th of the same month. Accept grandpahs thanks for the same. I contratulate you my dear grandson on the safe return of your beloved brother John Cleves, I hope your meeting will be joyful — be as happy as possible together,

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

but I beg that you will not detain him too long at Lexington — remember that he has yet a great deal to learn. He has hitherto only known how to lay out money. I wish to learn him now, how to make money, formerly his prospects were fair and flattering, they are now otherwise and limited. Your father by some unaccountable conduct has disinherited you at a stroke of a fortune which I had been fifty years in acquiring by the dint of industry, care, hardship and danger, all, all is swept into ruin by a moments folly. It remains therefore my dear Charles for you and your brother to make your own fortunes. You are therefore doubly called upon to exert yourselves in gaining knowledge, be studious, be prudent, careful and wise, leave no means unresorted to. to acquire knowledge of the noblest kind, study oeconomy in every thing, waste nothing that can be converted to some useful purpose, even a crumb of bread may feed a chicken, a very small piece of cloth may stop a hole in Your garment, one needleful of thread may darn a hole in your stocking — Sands make the mountain; and while you are acquiring learning, studying how by industry, care, and oeconomy to make yourself rich, Improve yourself also in suavity of manners, be moderate in all your passions, genteel in your deportment, and obliging in your commerce with mankind, but be ever on your guard, trust the fair promises of no mortal unless they are reduced to writing and cloathed with legal solemnities, this is an age for swindling. It is scarcely possible for the wisest men to work their way through life without being drawn into some snare, some trap or gin whereby they find themselves entangled, and cannot escape without loss, and are frequently subjected to utter ruin.

While you are yet at College, study a little of the graces. Never suffer You[r] body to appear in a lounging attitude, keep yourself erect while standing, sitting or riding — when eating, hang not over your plate or your cup, feed yourself without resting your elbows on the table, take no more food on your plate than you can consume, recollect that what you leave on your plate is sure to be lost, fill not the cloth around your plate with crumbs of bread which you have carelessly or wantonly crumbled off your slice. as your employment calls you not much abroad, keep yourself always clean and neat, your hair combed, your shoes black,



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

your socks darned should they break, & darn them yourself, for you ought to learn to darn your own stockings. It will be an amusement to you after a hard days Study. in the plainness of your dress be a quaker, in persevering industry be a shaker — in ease and politeness be a Chesterfield. do not let it be known that you think yourself better than others, but shew them by your conduct that you really are so, justify yourself by your deeds, and others will soon be taught to justify you in loud praises.

But you shall hear more on these subjects when you come to Cleves next fall, for we must make it a rule that Your brother John come to Lexington every spring, and that every fall you come over here. previous absence heightens the pleasure of meeting with friends. You make a wrong use my son of the information I give you “that all about my house are strangers” This circumstance you urge ought to induce me the rather to leave home in order to visit those who love me better than strangers do. but my son, what man in his senses would even willingly go abroad and leave his house full of thieves and robbers, in the space of twenty years last past I have had more than three thousand dollars worth of property actually stolen and carried away from my house & plantation, in household furniture, farming utensils, & livestock

I must now bring my letter to a close, as Your Uncle Ridgely and your brother are preparing for their Journey.

write me my dear grandson, and believe me Your

4th july 1810.

ever affectionate grandpah,

Master Charles W. Short

John Cleves Symmes.

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO JOHN CLEVES SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Cincinnati Decemr 14th 1810.

My dear grandson,

I am extremely pained to learn by your late letter to me, as also by Mr Wilkin's, letter to Genl Findley, that you are, and have been for several weeks past in a most distressed situation for want of health, that great blessing which none know duly how to prize until deprived thereof. I believe that for eight or ten years past

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

you have enjoyed very confirmed health the greater part of your time — let god be praised therefor. still no mortal can expect to be exempt from the common calamities of life. Youth itself cannot always protect, dangers and disease strew thick the path of life & often blight the fairest prospects. common fate awaits alike the whole human race. he deserves misfortunes least who bears them with the greatest fortitude and resignation.

In the midst of your affliction contemplate a kind providence, which has so ordered things for you, that before you was taken sick, you was suffered to arrive at Lexington among your kind relations with whom you had been in a great measure raised. Be thankful to god, my son, that he did not visit you with sickness at Cleves, where you would have had a drunken woman to attend you, nor would it have been in my power, perhaps, to have procured a better. Our doctor too is but a mere quack compared with your kind and skilful Uncle Ridgely, who I am assured will do all he can to restore you to health. But you must do a little yourself my son — much depends on the state of your mind, be not disheartened in the least, let nothing damp your mind or depress your spirits, if your spirits are low, your dear brother Charles must stay constantly with you and cheer and divert you by every means in his power. I hope that in a few weeks you will be able to ride out, however, ride but a short distance at first, when perfectly recovered I shall be happy to see you at Cleves, but take your own time my son, and do not hazard a relaps. I left home on the 9th instant, came here to attend the Court which closes tomorrow. I then return. Please to present my best respects to your good Uncles and Aunts, and my kind love to your dear brother and sister, Your friends are all well here and at N.Bend. Mordacai Thuston & Deborah Bingle were married about two weeks ago. he is building a cabin near his father's. we have had hard cold weather for one month past — There are three new families come into the lower rooms of the new house. they are to build themselves cabins and go on farms in the spring

adieu my dear grand son may god restore health [to you]  
to return shortly to your very affectionate grandfather  
John Cleves Symmes



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[*O.H.S. Mss.*]

Cleves, 20th December 1810.

My dear grandson,

By the repeated information which I have received of your dear brothers extreme illness, it is now very doubtful whether he be yet in the land of the living. I was first apprised of your brothers dangerous situation by his own letter to me dated the 20th of November, which I received the 2nd of this month. The next information was by a letter of your Uncle Wilkins to General Findly, which the general put into my hands about the 10th of the month. But the most alarming of all is the letter of your good Uncle Ridgely dated on the 2nd and received the 15th instant, in which my dear grandsons case is stated to be quite desperate and almost hopeless. This letter being written 18 days ago, I suppose that by this time he is either in his peaceful grave, or that the disorder having come to a crisis, by this time he must be on the recovery, the latter, when I consider many circumstances attending his case, I cannot but hope to be his present situation.

He had youth on his side, & by no means of a sickly constitution his system had never been impaired by intemperance. nor broken in upon by any long fit of sickness to my knowledge. He kept good hours, and did not expose himself to the deadly damps of the night. I believe that he has always been regular, moderate and sedate. If he be cut off in his youth, under all these prospects of a long life, all I can say on the subject, is, that the ways of heaven are dark and intricate; all that I can do, is, to lay my hand on my mouth and seal my lips in silence [and] profound adoration of that divine being, in whose hands is the breath of every living mortal.

This day I wrote a letter to your aunt Harrison, informing her of the situation of your dear brother at the date of Doctor Ridgely's letter; the news to her must be distressing indeed.

Had I been in my Usual good health on the receipt of your dear brothers letter, I should have certainly have set out with all possible haste for Lexington, but from the 22nd of October when our

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

Supreme Court began at Cincinnati, at which time you and your brother were there, I have been drawn round from one County to another unceasingly until last tuesday the 18th, only the day before yesterday, I came home, & am now in my solitary chamber, in safety indeed I hope. but in very bad health by reason of a very bad cold, cough, and loss of appetite, which has afflicted me a great part of the time I have been abroad. I hope however, that by a little respite from traveling, a warm room, and a little nursing, I shall not be altogether confined to my bed, tho' I am now, & have been for several weeks past, often obliged to take refuge in my bed to drowse a little, if possible, to relieve a troublesome pain in my head, occasioned by over much coughing. I have had no chills, nor fevers, but frequent pains in all my limbs, and every part of my frame. I beg my dear grandson, that if your poor brother be yet alive, that you assure him of my kindest and lasting affection, and kiss your dear sister for grandpah — give my best respects to both your kind uncles & aunts who have heaped fresh obligations on me for their kindness to my dear grandson. For the present I bid you my dear son, an affectionate farewell.

Master C. W. Short.

John Cleves Symmes

### JOHN CLEVES SHORT TO JOHN CLEVES SYMMES

[*O.H.S. Mss.*]

Lexington, Ky. January 14th, 1812

My dear Grandfather

I received two or three days ago your agreeable letter of the third instant. I had been long expecting to hear from you and wondered why I was denied that pleasure — I congratulate you on the merry christmas which you spent and am happy to hear of the cause of that festivity, cousin Julia's wedding. I know of nothing which is so calculated to diffuse mirth and hilarity on every thing around, as a marriage. Accordingly we find that all nations, savage as well as civilized, have concurred in celebrating the matrimonial ceremony with some tokens of joy, hope and gaiety.—— I am still expecting in the course of a few weeks, perhaps months, to become an inhabitant of Cincinnati. I know not however exactly when this will



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

happen, "doubt and darkness hang upon it" — I am anxious for many reasons that it should happen soon. I will then have the satisfaction of oftener seeing you — I will become more easily assimilated in habits with a people who wisely discard slavery from their state (for I have become a most determined advocate for the policy of non-slavery)<sup>24</sup> — and, if things go on as I hope they will, I will have it more in my power to render active service to my brother, sisters and self — — in short I am more attached to the state of Ohio than any part of the Union which I have seen — I consider the Ohio river as the grand artery of this western country, or as a vien [vein] which distributes life and vigor through an otherwise dead mass of interior continental country.

Besides a country tilled by freemen must be ever superior in strength in population and in cheerful wealth to one bedewed by the filthy sweat of an unwilling slave — In such a country as this last, tho the harvests may be many and the productions much, nature seems to wear a sickly and unnatural smile, and the very bread you eat seems to savour of nauseous tyranny. It appears to me were I the father of a promising offspring no consideration should [corrupt], no fair prospect of increasing wealth should allure, me, to suffer my children to be educated in a country where negro slavery was tolerated — Would you wish them trained up in the observance of rectitude, virtue, morality & temperance? Can the blooming hyacinth put forth its tender and delicious bud in the air which is polluted by the poisonous Jamestown weed?

I hope you have come to a close with Isaac Cooper and that you may get things so arranged as to make Aunt Harrison a visit, shortly. Consider how anxious she must be to see you — how impossible it is for her to come to you — and how gratified her children would be to see their grandfather about whom they have heard so much. ——— I have delivered Charles your message concerning his horse, though I am at present unadvised of his de-

<sup>24</sup>In his anti-slavery views John Cleves Short followed the example of his father, who in his will declared that did circumstances permit, "I would bequeath to them [his slaves] that Liberty to wch they are by nature entitled." He recommended that his heirs treat them "with Mercy and Humanity" and free them as soon as possible by a "gradual Emancipation." Will of Peyton Short, April 9, 1802, copy in *Short Family Papers*.

## TO HIS GRANDSONS

terminations respecting him. I think he would be more speedy in devising ways and means of getting him here if he was not sure he is in good quarters with you — General Findley has been here some weeks confined to his room by the rheumatism — Will you write to me as often as you have leisure? I would commence on the other page but am at this very moment a little pressed for time —

Yrs            Jno Cleves Short



PART II

LETTERS FROM JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO PEYTON  
SHORT AND MARIA SHORT

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO PEYTON SHORT

[*H.P.S.O. Mss.*]

Reading Pennsylvania Oct:18th 1793

Dear Mr. Short — Your kind favors of the 12th June & 10th August came not to my hand till the 10th Inst. Am happy to hear that you are in so comfortable a situation in your family touching their health &c.

I am thus far with my brothers family, now on their way to Miami — tomorrow morning we part, I return to Jersey and they proceed on their way to the Ohio. By my brother I have written to Danl and Celadon<sup>1</sup> Symmes to pay you one hundred pounds out of my monies now in their hands — this you can have any time on your order to them. But if you should have set out before this reaches you, I will let you have the money on your arrival — I wish you success in your Journey if you undertake it with or without Maria & dear John. I mentioned in my Note to Maria enclosed that I was not in very good health. I am now somewhat better than when I wrote on the 14th and feel no more chilly fits and flashes of a fever as I did last week. I hope soon to have my health perfectly restored.

<sup>1</sup>Celadon Symmes, son of Judge Symmes' brother, Timothy, settled at Symmes' Corner, on the road between Cincinnati and Hamilton. He became a justice of the peace, and a judge in the court of common pleas. McBride, *Pioneer Biography*, vol. II, p. 230.

## TO PEYTON AND MARIA SHORT

Great mortallity has prevailed all the fall at Philadelphia.<sup>2</sup> Several thousands have gone down to the grave. fortunately it does not as yet spread much out of the City, few instances indeed of its being communicated out of the contaminated atmosphere of that devoted City. Some begin to be of opinion that every person in the City will die if they abide there much longer — It is now said that a six pounder may be fired with grape shot along the middle of any street in the City without endangering the lives of many if of any at all of the Inhabitants of the Town. The destroying angel seems indeed to be in earnest to make that so late wealthy and populous City a mere monument of desolation and habitation of reptiles, bats and owls.

My love and a kiss apiece to dear Maria and her little swift footed Asael who can run like a young colt.

Dear Sir adieu

P. Short Esq.

John C. Symmes

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO  
MR. AND MRS. PEYTON SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Philadelphia 28th April 1797.

Dear children, I just date a piece of paper for you, that you may know that I am yet alive and tolerably well, tho' I think my close confinement to my book is in some degree prejudicial to my health, merely for want of exercise —

I have let Capt Suydam take your horse to ride out to the western country and he is to convey him to you with saddle & bridle free of expence to you — when you left me sir, I had no knowledge of the meeting of Congress in May, and then thought of going soon into Jersey — but after Congress was called I concluded that all my time was too little to prepare my business to lay before Congress again by the May session, Yet I ardently hope they will not take up the subject again until next winter session when I hope to be fully prepared as well with money as with argu-

<sup>2</sup>An epidemic of yellow fever raged in Philadelphia in the late summer and fall of 1793. *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884*, Philadelphia, 1888, vol. I, pp. 469-470.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

ment — Indeed money will be the best argument that can be Used though I had the logic and oratory of a Cicero, and the right of Adam to the soil, and indeed as an American I have, Adams right was founded in prior occupancy and so is mine, but with this advantage in my favor, that I had the assent of the nation to that occupancy.<sup>3</sup> I think money in my cause as efficient as Demosthenes thought *action* in orratory, who when asked what was the chief part of an orator? answered, action, what next? action, what next? action. so if we can but make out 82.000 dollars, I dare say there will be conviction in them. I have heard not a word from you Mr Short since the letter you wrote me from Pitt. My dear maria, I long to hear from you and my two sweet little grandsons, and that they are in health as well as yourself, though what right have I to expect that we shall always remain in health or even in tolerable comfort in that respect. The time is certainly hastening when we must expect to be sick and even to die. this is the lot of all the human race, the great duty is to be ready to leave all our business, and part with all our friends, and depart in peace without a murmur or a groan if it were possible — In my last by Mr Bell which I hope Maria you have received, I mentioned the news of the death of your poor Uncle. I have written to your Aunt & given her many directions. Give my kind love to Polly Symmes and the dear little boys. I long to see them again, but must wait with patience for so pleasing a gratification, if I should be ever allowd it. You must write my dear daughter to your Mah sister & Aunt, and by frequent letters in some measure supply the place of visiting each Yet it would afford great happiness to live near together — the western mail came in Yesterday but I had no letters either from you or from Miami, I hope the next weeks post will bring me some, for I feel very much alone tho in the midst of a City. We have no news very interesting here, but had we ever so much I have no time to waste on politicks. I rode out Yesterday in Mr Meekers Charriot to see the new frigate and went down three miles to the mouth of schuylkill a very pleasant ride, I never go out to the amusements of the City —

<sup>3</sup>This theory of the ownership of the soil was widely held in the colonial period. Cf. B. W. Bond, Jr., *Quit Rent System in the American Colonies*, New Haven, 1919, pp. 45-48.

## TO PEYTON AND MARIA SHORT

write me now and then by all means, & send your letters to the post office at Lexington, if they come safe a letter is but 25 cents, if they miscarry they cost nothing but the trouble of writing — Inform me sir, what are your prospects, and what impressions the Senates rejection of the Miami bill had on the minds of people generally.

Wishing you my dear children, and all yours every felicity and prosperity, I remain with great love and esteem

Yours affectionately

J. C. Symmes

Mr and Mrs Short

Not a word of Giles.

[Addressed:] Peyton Short Esquire Greenfield Woodford County Kentucky

## JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO PEYTON SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Philadelphia August 10th 1797 —

Dear sir —

Your favor by \* \* \* I received yesterday, Mr Clay I believe had been some how detained on the road —

I beg of you to suffer nothing to divert you from coming with Maria & Mrs Symmes, if she has a desire to come, to Phila. in the fall — write me at Pittsburgh on the subject — Not a word of your run away Giles — I believe Suydam has gone to Miami with your horse for I have not seen nor heard of him for five weeks past — I leave town tomorrow morning to go to New York for Mrs Linn to take her to Pittsburgh if she chuses to go; shall then go to mother Henrys, Morris Town, Sussex & flatbrook, cross the Delaware at Easton & so onward for Pittsburgh, where I shall leave the coaches & horses for Mrs Symmes & Maria — I shall take two saddle horses for myself & Jo Potter to ride to Presqueile on my way to Detroit — we have had a deluge of rain here lately — it rained for a whole week together — I expect that Capt Harrison



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

will lend you a boat & perhaps some officer may be ascending the Ohio with whom you may have a passage if the commander in chief forbids not — with great regard

I am sir Yours

Mr Short —

J C. Symmes

[Addressed:] Peyton Short Esqr Woodford County, Kentucky  
Hon'd by Mr Clay

### JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO PEYTON SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Cincinnati, 22nd of April 1798.

Dr Sir —

I have received Your two letters of the 29th March and 13th April, and am extremely afflicted at your melancholy relation of dear Maria's indisposition. I am extremely intent upon coming to see Maria so soon as ever I can get through the judicial & legislative business we have now on our hands — The two judges from Marietta are both here, and therefore I cannot leave them until we finish our business —

As Your first offer had nothing in it any way tempting to me to conclude a contract, save that I pleased myself with an Idea that it would open a door to my happiness in having my children settled round me in my old age, & knowing also that it would be greatly advantageous to you as well as pleasing to me I was led to make you the offer — But believe me sir, no man living but yourself and Capt Harrison should have what I offered you, not one farthing under thirty thousand dollars, with your proposed payments.

My new house is nearly finished, it is at your service until Mrs Symmes returns from N. York which will not be much if any short of two years. therefore there is nothing in the way that can be a reasonable objection to your bringing over your wife and children and a few servants to settle on this \* \* \*

## TO PEYTON AND MARIA SHORT

If Marias Health will admit, when I come to Greenfield, I shall wish for the pleasure of bringing her and children to fort Washington until our new house can be cleansed and made fit for the reception of your household goods and family — mean time Mrs Short can live with her sister or father until the house is prepared — In case you contemplate a removal to this territory at all, I persuade myself sir that you will have no Objection to this plan, and will promote it — Your family once fixed here, all other difficulties will vanish — but their being settled here is the only term on which I can be disposed to part with land in the reserved township — for otherwise I would much sooner purchase more than sell any. I cannot live long; my dear daughters are both invalids; and unless we are expeditiously brought together into the same neighborhood, I shall despair of ever effecting what I have been for ten years past seeking and trying to bring about.

I am dear sir, with great esteem and regard Your humble servant.

Mr Short

John C. Symmes

[Addressed:] Peyton Short Esquire Greenfield Woodford County.  
Kentucky

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO  
MR. AND MRS. PEYTON SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Cleves Decemr 26th 1799.

My dear Children,

Since I Received your favors by your waggoners I have had no opportunity of writing till now — for the waggoners were gone back before I knew they were at Cincinnati. We are all in good health in these parts, I know of none of our relations that are unwell but Billy Symmes he has been troubled with the fever & ague this fall — Celadon & his wife came down to keep Christmas with me they left me this morning for home — I enclose to my dear Maria a letter from her sister. I have heard of them by a traveller who saw them beyond the Allegany Mountains all in good health — Long since must they have been at their Jorneys end —



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

I am sorry Mr Short that your whisky did not arrive at Cincinnati sooner, for Just before yours came a Cargo arrived down the Ohio which in some measure injured the sale of yours. I do not think that yours has commanded more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  dol pr galn. & I Understand it is of slow sale even at that. I have lent Capt Howel Capt Harrisons old hackmare — but the three valuable mares & two Colts I have sold to Capt White for 450 dolrs 3 years credit with Interest from date.

I have agreed with Capt Piats son Benjan<sup>4</sup> to be our superintendant, provided he can raise the six privates — he has a wife to whom I have agreed to allow one dol pr week to pay for a female drudge about the house — I find we must procure all our force from Kentucky, for not a man presents on this side Ohio but Mr Runyans good friend Ryal who offers as overseer. I answered that as he understood cards bottles & glasses much better than ploughs and harrows, a manufactory would suit him much better than a farm. I am now about getting the hoes & axes for the work of the farm — I believe we can do well with the Oxen we have perhaps it may be necessary for you to send over two horses in the spring but not before for fodder runs very low at the point. I do not think it necessary to send over any more as yet to Capt Howel — he has a good yoak of oxen & we have cut a waggon Road to his house he can therefore come to mill with a sled and to go farther abroad is unnecessary for him — therefore till corn hoing he needs no horse kind more than he has.

I have some thoughts of giving him two hired men, extinguishing his equity in his 200. acres, and letting him farm on shares his 200 acres and all the old fields of the goose-pond bottom — he proposed this himself. it is now under consideration with me. What say you on the subject? The project is for you and Capt Harrison, but I think it unnecessary to consult him on the subject, his head by this time must be so full of ships and Empires that there is no room left for waggons & farms. — I shall put up some considerable quantity of provisionss for the point farm, to last till

<sup>4</sup>Benjamin Piatt was the eldest son of Jacob Piatt, who came from Essex County, New Jersey, and settled in Boone County, Kentucky. Benjamin finally became a merchant at Lawrenceburg across the Ohio. Henderson, *Historical Sketches*, vol. II, *H.P.S.O. Mss.*

## TO PEYTON AND MARIA SHORT

new beef will do next fall —. Mr. John Smith has got your white bull and heffar — and I have sold three of your steers, & intend to kill some for beef to supply the point farmers. for if the winter is severe it will be no easy task to bring the stock through safe without loss. I have provided myself with salt for the purpose — Neither Anthony nor major Howel has applied for any.

Since our advertisement for hands, People have enquired of me for what kind of farming business they are to be chiefly employed in — my answer was — “for the culture of hemp in the overflowed bottom at the Point” — they pretty generally replied that overflowed bottoms are not good for hemp — that the growth is so rapid & to such extreme that there will be no lint or coat at all on the stalk — will you be pleased to enquire into this matter and fully ascertain the fact if true or not — It is of consequence that we should know it. They all agree that second bottoms will be good for hem[p] & overflowed not good — if this be true we must prepare the lick farm, the Garrison farm, Brokaws farm, and the high cleared ground about Antonys — and I persuade myself that it must have been reduced to certainty on James River and in Kentucky — There is another matter which I must submit to you — it is, that among the hands which Benja. Piat can have there is one Elijah Horsely which has for several years been considered as the best hand to hire that is on either side the Ohio — he never works for common wages — he asks 120 dollrs for a year — but this is a secret between him and Piat — If we agree to give it, it is not to be made known to the other hands, as the others work for 100 [dollrs] and it might work discontent. Piat tells me that all his hands cannot come by new years but [that] some will, and the others will follow [in] a few weeks after, so that they will [arrive] much later — I have seen Jo Cox you[r] \* \* \* River Man, he has been after his [money] I told him I would give him our \* \* \* [in] paper money — he would not take [it] but says if it obtain a currency he [will take] it — I think it will be good for a \* \* \* at least — I fear Austin will not [be able] to get any other for your whisky — \* \* \* Gibson, and Smith & Findley take \* \* \* silver, and all the tavern keepers [and] some of the merchants will not \* \* \*



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

Dear Polly, I have not time \* \* \* to write to you — a Mr Patterson who is going to George town is waiting — kiss all my dear grand children for Grand pah. tell them grand pah wants to see [them] but knows not when he can it is difficult to leave home as nobody can supply my place — I expect you all over here in the spring and cannot be disappointed without sorrow — give my love to Cousine Polly and tell her to be a good girl her brother Johnny came to keep christmass with us and says they are all well at home, adieu my dear Children adieu

John C Symmes

Mr and Mrs Short

The soil for Hemp shd be a soft rich Loam easily [broken into] a fine tilth; and it shd. be well manured, [?] broken up Lands is found is found [sic] to be peculiarly good for this Plant — *but flat grounds lying on the sides of Rivers and enriched by the Sidiment left on shore from the Waters overflow, are best of all for it*

Complete Farmer's Dictionary

Addressed: Peyton Short Esqr Greenfield Woodford County Kentucky Honord by Mr Patterson

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO PEYTON SHORT

[H.P.S.O. Mss.]

Cleves, the 17th of March 1800.

My dear friend,

I would obey your invitation to make you a visit with, eagles wings, were it in my power, but the supreme Court sits tomorrow-morning. I hope, my dear daughter, though she be much afflicted, will not lose all her spirits, nay none of them, because I cannot come just at this time to see her — I will come and that shortly. buoy up her courage, Keep her spirits, which are never very high — at least at par with herself. But I must say something of business.

I have about three weeks ago planted Benjamin Piat with four other hands at the Point (though one of them has since left our service, as three others had done some time before) one of the men has a wife who cooks for the whole.

## TO PEYTON AND MARIA SHORT

They have been employed in carting rails out of the bottom — In cutting elders at the ground — & chopping and burning logs. — two days ago the waggon came up here & took down two ploughs — they have not yet broke ground, and indeed the teams are not yet arranged — I have put a waggon & two yoke of oxen on the point for the present, until others may be provided — Mr Harrison sold three yoke of oxen & a good waggon just as he set out from home, these would now be of use. One pair if not two pair of horses are necessary. if you can spare a couple of horses & harness for them I think we can make do pretty well for I can put oxen plenty on the place and they can have Harrisons greys a part of the time. As to provisions they at present have plenty, of all kinds bread, meat and sause. I have not yet been able to go but once to Point farm, so crowded am I with business, that I am not able to say whether the men or either of them do you justice or not. I believe however that they would all be a little the better for good looking to, both, with respect to their industry, as well as to the preservation of their provisions. I have given the cook two cows to milk, none of your heffers having yet calved. I have procrastinated the signing of the articles with Piat the overseer, in order to gain some Knowledge of Piat's industry & skill as a farmer, as well as to give you an opportunity of seeing and conversing with him and forming Your own opinion of his talents.

The article that is most wanted to prossecute the plan of culture at the Point is hemp-seed. that requisite is not to be obtained in these parts. It must come from abroad — I have only seven bushels or thereabouts. I wrote you lately from Cincinnati on this point, whether it will be best to transport your hemseed by land or water you will be better able to determine — If you can spare a team & waggon not to return again, I think you had better send it loaded with hempseed — I will buy a Kentucky boat at Cincinnati bring her across to Kanady's ferry, and take all in at once & go down to Point farm with her. But if you cannot send a waggon & team that you can spare for the season — then you will devise a mean of forwarding the hemp seed in the best manner you can, either by water in a perogue, or in waggons to Kanadys, to be there delivered to my care, whence I will have it taken down



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

to Point farm by water; as to provisions, none will be very soon wanted — perhaps a supply of bacon after a while may be necessary — but as yet there is no need — and for bread we know no want.

Mr John Smith<sup>5</sup> sailed last Wednesday for N. orleans. he has taken flour, beer, Whisky, bacon & cheese. the Indians might, if hungry, make a tolerable dinner out of his cargo. We have the Keelboat to freight off yet. Luke foster is to have the command of her to follow Mr Smith — we want more whisky & bacon to put in her than I can well raise without paying away too much money — flour we fear, by the time she arrives, will become a drug — Mr Rosster will inform you that we have been alarmed with fire — Careless, or spiteful, some person or other set fire to the fence Round the Lick-field as you go to the Point. we were alarmed at sunset on sunday evening — I raised five men, went down & saved the Cabins, & prevented its spreading towards the Point — next morning by dawn of day sent down 12 men more, with orders to prevent & check the progress of the fire towards the Goosepond improvements — Gave them plenty of whisky to raise their courage to fight the flames — they gained a victory — being a little drunk they, contrary to my orders, all came home in security — I raved at their leaving the fire which ought to be watched on all such occasions incessantly for three days — I sent 4 men directly back again — they found the fire worse than ever — the whole neighborhood was raised — the fire once more subdued — and 8 or 10 men left all last night to watch it. Mr Rosster was one of these volunteers, he can give it you in detail — but more than all our efforts, Good heaven sent a flood of rain to quench the fire in logs & old trees & wet the earth which was dry in the extreme — By this fire you have lost about two thousand rails I have paid Joseph Cox according to your desire and have taken up your two Notes —

I enclose you a letter I received the other day from Col: Edgar — You see he wants whisky — by a little address you may

<sup>5</sup>John Smith, a Baptist clergyman, came to Columbia in 1791. His occupations were varied — preaching, farming and trading down the Mississippi. In 1804 he was elected to the U. S. Senate, and later was accused of complicity in Burr's plot. *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. XVII, New York, 1935, pp. 296-297.

## TO PEYTON AND MARIA SHORT

get an acre of land for a galn of Whisky deliverd at Massack. I have written to Mr Edgar that you cannot deliver the whisky lower down the Ohio than Massack.<sup>6</sup> — I enclose you sir one of my sioto advertisements — the adventurers meet on saturday the 29th Instant at John Lyons tavern on the Hamilton Road 12 miles from Cincinnati. the company marches in one week afterwards. I do not expect to go out my self at first, but let the company chuse a foreman from among themselves. each man must plant 5 acres of corn in some Pararie. this I do only to fix a point Where to send out purchasers. Capt Harrison writes that he has registerd all my military warrants thirty six thousand acres — I expect a map from him in three weeks pointing out where my lands lie.<sup>7</sup>

He writes favorably of my claim to Miami lands as high as the head of little Miami, & thinks the whole million will be obtained by me the next session.

People above the patent are now in high spirits, and are flocking down to make Contracts. though as yet I am very Indifferent to sell. I wish first to see the law if one should pass.

I am this moment informed that Capt Craig, Cave Johnson, & Mr Bush, have lately cut a good waggon Road from Reads tavern to Northbend 20 feet wide all clear.

I hope sir, you will not disappoint me in making your arrangements such, that Mary and her two little boys come over here as soon as her recovery from her expected confinement will admit, nothing can rejoice me more than such a greeting, — I will add a little tomorrow at Cincinnati when I see fresh letters from Harrison.

Mr Short

My dear sir adieu . J. C. Symmes.

<sup>6</sup>Like General Harrison and Judge Symmes, Peyton Short was interested in a distillery. There was a steady domestic market for whisky, and it was an important item in the river trade to New Orleans. Green, *William Henry Harrison*, p. 413; Cf. John Cleves Symmes to Peyton Short, 1800?, *post*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>7</sup>Judge Symmes planned a settlement upon these lands in the Scioto Valley. To each head of a family he offered to donate ten acres in the proposed village, provided he stayed for a year. The surrounding farms of 250 acres each Judge Symmes offered to sell for \$1.00 per acre, payable on very liberal terms. The prospective settlers were instructed to go to the seventh range of townships and then to cross the Little Miami at Old Chillicothe, north of Xenia. From there they would cut a wagon road to the Scioto and then to the actual site of the proposed settlement. In spite of these elaborate plans there is no available record of any actual settlement. *Western Spy*, February 19, 1800.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

[JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO PEYTON SHORT?]

[*Short Family Papers*]

[1800?]

As there is a vacancy on the back of Col Edgars<sup>8</sup> letter within, I will fill it with a few hints, perhaps to your advantage — The general character of the Rich-lands of which he speaks, is in point of quality of soil & surface equal to any in the N.W. Territory. & is now worth 4 dolrs per acre — I say worth 4 dolrs per acre on this calculation. viz. take 4 dollrs & put it out at compound Interest for 20 years. Take other 4 dolrs & lay it out for 1 acre of the Rich land tract — or let the proportions be hundreds. 400 dollars at Interest & 400 dolrs in land for 100 acres, It is my belief that at the end of 20 years to come, the 400 dollars laid out in lands at 4 dol per acre, in the Rich lands on Kaskaskias River will produce a larger sum if sold, than the principal of 400 dollars put on Interest compound, for 20 years in the aggregate — you ask me why? tis nearer Orleans — St. Louis. Geneveve. the lead-mines — the Spanish salines — than any Country. above Massack. water transportation. from the spot. french and Spaniards never Cultivate The title is sure — Money may be lost — lands will remain, and its products like Jemmy Thomsons Ox fly “returning still”.

You ask me how you are to come at these lands? I will tell you. — write to Col Edgar & give him the refusal of twenty thousand gallions of whisky delivered at Massack at one acre per galln of the donations, laid out at the grounds called the Rich-lands on Kaskaskias River, let him take what part, or the whole of the whisky if he pleases — but do not hint to him or any other person that you mean to offer the residue of the whisky to other settlers in the Illinois. until you have driven a Contract with Col Edger in writing — this Contract will then serve as a precedent for twenty others. and every man owning lands in the same place or Rich lands, want whisky as much as Edgar, and subsequent contracts may be drove at pleasure.

<sup>8</sup>Colonel John Edgar, a prominent merchant of Kaskaskia, was deeply involved in the widespread speculations in Western land at this time. C. W. Alvord, vol. I, *Centennial History of Illinois*, 1673–1818, Springfield, 1920, pp. 368, 369, and 421.

## TO PEYTON AND MARIA SHORT

Whisky sells for furs in that Country at 150-and 200. cents per galn. so that Edgar can have no cause of complaint, if after you supply him with all he wants — you should throw the remainder of your whisky into other hands.

What whisky you cannot make yourself in 12 or 18 months — I can procure for you in my payments for lands now sold.

A post road is now open from Louisville via Vincennes to Kaskaskias, by which conveyance you can write to Col Edgar — I have already written to him, & given it as my opinion that you cannot deliver the whisky at a greater distance than Fort Massack. from which place they can easily take it round in their Perogues — Knowing as I do the price that Whisky bears in that country — the dull sale for lands — the absolute dearth of money — and that nothing commands furs better than whisky in the Indian trade—at the same time Col Edgars necessity for a Negotiable medium — It is my opinion that he will close a contract with you of the nature of which I write — and I will fondly Join you in it, as I am sure of its being ultimately advantageous.

Keep this scheme a secret.

### Continuation of the Whisky subject.

I have [?] several stills of my Own which I wish to have set up — I can procure Rye at will, & corn in plenty, of those who Owe me. if these matters can be brought to a point, I think there will be no danger of undertaking a contract of this magnitude — One circumstance however ought to be attended to — that is, to gain as long a period of time as possible for the delivery of the whisky — let it be stipulated in the Contract, that the whisky shall be delivered at Massack at certain instalments, which may be agreed on, of about a perogue load at a time, as the French navigate altogether in such small craft, this may prove a saving, as 2 or 300 galns may be put on board of a passing boat going down the River with very little expence — Or may be put on board of a flour-boat which will, I hope, be ever pushing off from this purchase —



# INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO PEYTON SHORT

[*H.P.S.O. Mss.*]

Cincinnati may 12th 1803

I persuade myself that my dear grand sons will neither desire nor be indulged in the waste of their time from school. I lament that a more close application to their books had not taken place at the commencement of their 4th year of age. their time was nearly lost from 3 to 7. a period of 4 years which will be reimbursed if at all, by four years in their teens, or perhaps when rising twenty. I am much attached to the early studies of children; the time is well spared & the success double. the brain receives the deepest impression, is more retentive and fixed. To this hour I remember the lessons taught me when a child better than the cases reported in law-reports, which I have been reading over and over and over again for thirty years last past. I believe it nearly the same with all men.<sup>9</sup> I have lately received a letter from Mrs Symmes, she writes me that at Vincennes the family is troubled with colds and with fever & agues. the Govr is gone to Detroit. & is to hold a treaty with the Indians at Fort Wayne, on his return.

I am not, at present, able to say when I shall gain so much time ahead, as to justify an absence long enough to carry me hence to Woodford County. but my desires to see my dear grandchildren are so great that I know not how to restrain them. God preserve them in health, and from dangers & accidents to which children are exposed. a little daughter of Mrs Dill has lately had both her feet & legs scalded in a most shocking manner by the overset of a dinner-pot.

I shall be happy to see you here sir as soon as your interest will justify a visit.

Please to present my best respects to Mrs Short, and my tenderest love to Johnny, Charles, and dear dear Anna. It is hard and trying to my fortitude to bear with so almost a total deprivation of my nearest relations. It is to besure the common lot of mortals to be at times and in degree deprived of the company of

<sup>9</sup>Maria Symmes Short had died since Judge Symmes' letter of March 17, 1800, and Peyton Short had married again. Hence Judge Symmes' solicitude for his grandchildren. Cf., Part I, *ante*, pp. 1-49 *passim*.

## TO PEYTON AND MARIA SHORT

those they love and esteem; but my fate in this respect has been without example & beyond all measure. nor have I a dawn of hope that it can ever be otherwise.

Please to tell Johnny and Charles that I wrote them a letter several weeks ago which they have not yet been kind enough to answer; I hope they will no longer delay a letter to their grandpah who so much wishes at all times to hear from them.

I remain dear sir, your affectionate friend and very humble servant.

Peyton Short Esquire

John Cleves Symmes.

[Addressed:] Peyton Short Esquire Woodford County Kentucky

## JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO PEYTON SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Cincinnati 8th April 1804.

Dear sir —

The collector has called several times both on me & on Danl Symmes for your taxes, but neither of us have it in our power to pay it, tho' both have the wish to do it if we possibly could. The collector has given us Notice that he shall advertise your lands for sale, & that they will be sold for the taxes in about ten days or two weeks — This matter, as well as the division of the Reserved townships which I expect to be commenced the present week, loudly calls for your personal attention.

There is another subject which renders your presence very necessary here immediately. Joel Williams has forbid Mr Spencer (to whom you leased your houses in this place) taking possession of the houses and land, alledging that there is a balance due to him (Williams) from you, & that until he is paid, no body shall have possession of the lots and houses. I understand that Joel even threatens to attach that very property, and sell it by law, to raise his balance.

9th April. The Commissioners met in town this morning to proceed to the surveying & division of the Reserved Townships — Capt White, Mr Harrisons agent is in town with the Commis-



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

sioners; how they will proceed in the first Instance I know not, but certainly it will be necessary for you to be here — two of the Commissioners this moment called on me to inform me that they begin surveying tomorrow morning<sup>10</sup> — please sir to present my best respects to Mrs Short, Miss Symmes, & give my kindest love to my dear grand Children. while I remain sir,

affectionately yours,

Mr Short.

John C. Symmes

### JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO PEYTON SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Cincinnati, february the 6th 1805.

Dear sir — I have just received this sheet from Mr John Dimon, and thinking that you may not have heard from flatbrook in some time I forward it for your perusal — Mr Dimon seems to have his own troubles. I pity him indeed, but I know not how to relieve him — he is an honest man, and merits every Indulgence that a good tenant is intitled to.

Vaughn's New mill — of which he complains I suppose stands near Vaughn's saw-mill which perhaps you may Remember at the foot of the mountain adjoining Mr Harrisons upper farm which I had of Vanest, and near the high-way, on a brook that comes down from the mountain.

What pity it is that so fine an estate for grass and hay should turn to so little account as it does

My love to all your family —

Yours affectionately

Major Short.

John Cleves Symmes

[Addressed:] Peyton Short Esquire Green-field Woodford County Kentucky —

<sup>10</sup>A petition had been filed almost a year earlier for the division of the three fractional townships between the Ohio and the Miami Rivers. The petition stated that William Henry Harrison and Peyton Short were among the claimants. *Western Spy*, May 4, 1803.

TO PEYTON AND MARIA SHORT

JOHN DIMON TO [JOHN CLEVES SYMMES]

[*Short Family Papers*]

Flatbrook January th 21d — 1805.

Dear Sir — I Recd your letter of the Date August 31 You wish to no what business is going on flatbrook<sup>11</sup> the business is no grat for there is no Rent paid the Crops of grain is very light the grass very good this year the back Rent was left with Mr Husten he is pushing the tenants for the [money] I was to Corlect the Rent that became Due the Next Spring Mr Adams Rent was Set at 27 pound he bould [built] a New house he sat it near the Road the house is 20 by 26 good logs and it well finished he and I did Not Agree in the price of the house we left it to two men thay loured him 120 Dollars I thought it high but I wrote to Mr Short he gave me no Answer about the house Mr Dun Rent is 25 pound and he is behind hand Mr Sandurs Rent was 36 pound he Runway the Next March After Mr Short was hear he went of a Sunday Night there was no property to befond he had give Mr Short a Note of 60 pound, Mr Ridgway is on that place he is aboulding a New Log house the old barn fel down Last winter Mr Smith is gone of that place and Mr Scot is gone to that and the hole place he raises a good Deal of grain but pays no Rent he had a good crop of wheat when Mr Symes was hear his wheat was gone and paid no Rent he gave Mr Short a Note of 66 pounds and he is all his Rent behind since I no Not how to get the Rent Some of the tenants dont Rase there bread and they have no money: there horse and oxin I cant take — and alow them as much a gin as thay are worth as Mr Short Did

Mr Short writes the Rents must be paid and I Expect there property must be sold for thay are in no way of making money the wheat is Cut by the Incets [insects] this Last Summer the Summer Crops was very light Mr Short and I settled I had paid him 100 Dollars in your presents Mr Short agree to alow me 50 pound for that Lot at the open End of Mr Vannests farm I paid him forty Dollars more I let him have two Notes the amount of 100

<sup>11</sup>Judge Symmes had given Peyton Short and his wife at least a part interest in his New Jersey estate, Flatbrook. This letter forcibly illustrates the troubles of an absentee landlord.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

Dollars which was paid in a Litle while after I fel in Det 30 Dollars which I have paid Since I though hard of that place I Rented the upper part of Mr Vannest farm I have did the best I Could with it and Lost a good deail by it —

Mr Short Said that place was not his he Could low Nothing I moved that house which was beLow me I have now a good house to Live in but my mill is very poor but that ant all Mr Voughn hath bould a New grist mill and takes all my Custum I Expect I shall be obledge to Leave this place for my mill was my mane depdnce I Youst to grind about ten bushel a Day one Day with a Nother and now scarce ten bushel a week Mr Short wrote to me if I could repair the old mill the Expence not to Exsead two hundred Dollar I mite go on if Mr Voughn had not bould a mill then I would go on though two hundred is not anugh Mr Voughn will be abledge to sell his mill Next Spring we have a very Cold winter hear we have had about five week good Sleding it is a snowing to Day the Snow is about two feet deep upon the Leavel ———

I Re'vd Yours about ten Day ago and was very glad to hear of Your good health and family I am in good healh my self & my wife and family are well we have been a good deal sickly Last Summer. we have Eight Sons and three Dearthers now Living we Lost a Litle gail 6 year old the Next february after Mr Symmes Left hear Mr Marsh is Now at flatbrook he has not paid up his Rent he dont wish to let Every one see him he says the Agent did not youse him well and he will not pay no more Rent he has a good span of hiorsees the old Rent is in the hands of Mr Husten ———

judge Symmes I know not what to due to giting back in in Rent I youst to have grain to Sel Every spring an now I have non Somtimes I wish that plac and mills of Mr Voughn Could be bought I would Rent it and place of M Vanness that wold make a good plac-there ant Custum for two mills in this place Mr Voughn is in Dept about 5 or 6 hundred Dollers and mist Sell — a Nother thing we are so sickly hear that it is Discoring — Remember me to all inquiring frinds this from your [friend] & — Humble Servt.

John Dimon

TO PEYTON AND MARIA SHORT

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO PEYTON SHORT

[*H.P.S.O. Mss.*]

Cincinnati the 28th of February 1805.

My dear sir,

I beg sir that you will present my best and kindest wishes to good mother Henry. I hope the venerable lady enjoys good health with usual flow of spirits. I should deem myself singularly happy could I see her in your land of milk and honey. I hope she does not look often back like Lots wife on the country she has left, for though salt be a precious article in this country, yet I would sooner go for a supply to Mr Jeffersons salt mountain, than have the dear old lady made into a pillar of it, tho as big as an Egyptian Pyramid. give my kind respects to Mrs Short, and best love to all the Children. Mrs Symmes sends also her kind regards to you and to the ladies of your family, and love to all the Children. Miss Jane is not yet married; but we all wish she was, almost as much as she does herself. Daniel has just returned from the Legislature where he presided as president of the Senate and where he had the good fortune so far to please the members of the two houses, that they have honored him with a seat on the bench of the supreme Court in lieu of the ex Judge Meigs — his salary is 900\$ per anno: but he will have to ride over the whole state once a year for this. It seems he is somewhat of a favorite at the City of Washington, he lately received an appointment from Mr Gallatin to inspect all the books & papers in the Cincinnati land office, and count over all the money in the office of the receiver, and make report to Mr. Gallatin how he discovers matters to have been conducted, and whether the cash on hand corresponds with the receipts entered on the books.

Please to inform my dear grandson John, that his obliging letter of the 6th Instant shall be the subject of a letter to him by the next mail if I can get back from Northbend where I am going to set the wheels of industry in motion to prepare lands & fences for the next crop of Indian-Corn, but this my delay must not hinder him nor my little fellow Charles writing to me as often as they can. tell Peyton his mother wishes him to write to her, and he must not longer delay to gratify her desires to learn how he is.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

If Mr Perry sets fence for you, it is proposed that he get the post and rails off your land at Mill-Creek — I can procure Mr D. Symme's team to cart them, this will cause a great reduction in the price of the fence — but write me as soon as you can how the cutting of the rails & posts on your land meets with your approbation — or what other resort for timber we shall substitute.

I believe sir, that by this time you begin to think me like a pendulum, when once set in motion know not how to stop. but I will fatigue you no longer. so I wish you a good night.

11. oClock, thursday night.

Yours affectionately

Peyton Short Esqr

John Cleves Symmes.

[Addressed:] Peyton Short Esquire Greenfield, near Versaelle  
Woodford County Kentucky

### JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO PEYTON SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Cincinnati, july 22nd 1805.

My dear sir,

Yours of the dates of 24th june and 29th june are on the table before me. I have at length got a shingled roof on Your house here which had none before, by as yet there is no tenant in it for want of Flints laying the floors & making the doors, there is one Woodruff in the other Cabin where Perry lived.

Governor Harrison has authorised Capt White to subscribe a new petition to the Court for the division of the reserved fractional townships — this petition I intend to draw and have it ready to present at the next Court which sits the first week in August next. I beg you will write to some man (not me nor Daniel) authorising him to sign the petition on your behalf when it is prepared with the approbation of Capt White.

I have made no bargain yet with McNichol, nor do I think the prospect great, that I shall. to make the other house tenantable

## TO PEYTON AND MARIA SHORT

and get good tenants in both perhaps is the fairest prospect at present.<sup>12</sup>

John C Symmes<sup>13</sup> from the army, lately passed this place with five boats, with soldiers and ordinance stores for St. Louis, he came direct from Niagary to Albany, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh & there embarked — he says he was at Doctr John Henrys at Geneve in the Genesee-country, that the Doctor & his family are all well. he staid with us but two days and proceeded down the river. he expects a furlough for six months on his arrival at St Louis. he will spend next winter with us.

I beg sir that you will make my best respects to mother Henry and Mrs Short in which Mrs Symmes joins me. give also our United love to our dear grand children, should be glad if we had little Maria Anna with us that she might go to a good madams school [in this] neighborhood.

Most affectionately, I bid you adieu dear sir,

John Cleves Symmes.

## JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO PEYTON SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Cincinnati, the 14th of April 1807.

Dr Sir —

So soon as the advertisement for the sale of your lots in this town appeared in the publick papers, Jesse Hunt<sup>14</sup> took the ad-

<sup>12</sup>There was little demand for real estate in Cincinnati at this time. Judge Symmes complained that the severe winter and the prevalence of smallpox had brought about such a crisis that "no stranger has dared show his head here" for "Death has galloped his pale face through our town at a wonderful rate for a week or two past." John Cleves Symmes to Peyton Short, February 8, 1805, *Clarke Mss.* (H.P.S.O.).

<sup>13</sup>John Cleves Symmes, Jr., son of Judge Symmes' brother, Timothy, strongly resembled his uncle in his adventurous spirit and his interest in mathematical and physical theories. Enlisting in the U. S. army, he was commissioned captain in 1812 and retired in 1816, settling at St. Louis. His *Theory of Concentric Spheres* attracted much attention at that time. He died in 1829 at Hamilton, Ohio. McBride, *Pioneer Biography*, vol. II, pp. 230-232.

<sup>14</sup>Jesse Hunt came to Cincinnati from New Jersey in 1879 and had a leading part in its commercial development. In the War of 1812 he did excellent work in the commissary department, and especially in maintaining the credit of the Government. *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, August 26, 1835.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

vantage of the time assigned, and published to sell at Vendue a great number of town lots, several days before the day of the sale of your lots arrived — Mr Hunt sold many lots and for a very high price — This measure of Hunts forestalled us in the market, as almost everybody had supplied themselves before our sales came on — fifteen lots only were cryed off, the highest at sixty six dollars and the lowest at twenty one — but even some of these I expect will return to you through default of the first payment — as several of the purchasers are very poor — and what is worse, very worthless.

You not being here to give the deeds, forbid me to demand the first third part of the purchase money, and I have therefore limitted the first payment to one month from the day of sale. Indeed I do not think much money can be collected after the expiration of the month.

Capt Jacob White purchased two lots at \$72. but he intimated that he had a demand against you that he expected to discount. the whole amount of sales is more than \$500. and I believe 40 lots more may be sold, and still reserve the two houses and a lot to each. I am inclined to think it best to sell the houses at private sale, or rent them, as rents are becoming quite enormously high. 3 houses in town rent at 400\$ each. per annum. General Findlay informs me that he has entered your Island tract agreeably to your directions. he entered it on the 7th Inst.

J C S

he desires you will attend to the expiration of the forty days from the time of entry, as he cannot.

[Addressed:] Peyton Short Esquire Woodford County Kentucky

PART III

LETTERS RELATING TO MRS. SUSAN (Susanna) SYMMES

SUSAN SYMMES<sup>1</sup> TO JOHN CLEVES SYMMES

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

North Bend July 28th 1795

My Dr Friend

My Last letters from N.Y. inform me of the great rise of Stock, as high as 50 per cent advance; would it not be best to empower your Friend Judge Morris to dispose of 4 shares that's standing in my name in the U.S. Bank, the money might be laid out to better advantage in Lands here — I gave 60 per cent adc. when I purchased in the Bank, which is an additional reason why it would be proper to sell out when Stock is in demand — I will write to Mrs Ridley to deliver the certificates to Judge Morris — When I married I had some interest in certificates, 6 per cent, 3 per cent & deferred stock, on the books of N.Y. which Genl. Clarkson purchased for me while in Maryland, he has them in his possession, I could wish you would empower Sister Ridley to sell them & receive the interest due on them, likewise empower her to receive what is due to me from my fathers estate & what may hereafter become due, as she is acquainted with the Executors & will receive her own dividend, & also the interest & principal due to me on bonds — I have the firmest reliance on her integrity she will keep an accurate account of what she receives, & either remit us the

<sup>1</sup>Respecting Judge Symmes' third wife, Susan (Susanna) Livingston, there are few available records. The daughter of Governor William Livingston of New Jersey, one sister was married to John Jay, and a brother was appointed to the U. S. Supreme Court. Susan Livingston married Judge Symmes in 1794, and was soon on friendly terms with his two daughters, especially with Mrs. Harrison, with whom she spent much time during Judge Symmes' frequent absences. Mrs. Symmes never lost her longing for her old home, and in 1808 she went to New York for an indefinite stay. See these letters, *passim*.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

money or employ it as we may direct — or if you object to her, Genl. Clarkson I doubt not will be obliging enough to undertake it, he could not receive the interest for me that was due on the Stock he sold Mrs. Ridley without a power of Attorney being lodged in the office —

You were so kind as to tell me that you would enable me either to receive the interest or transfer the Stock just as I pleased, you can now use your pleasure, either to do it yourself or enable me to empower others — I want the money to be employed to better advantage so that we might derive some benefit from it ourselves, & the principal be increasing in value, as it has ever been my favorite wish that my 2 little orphan nieces might inherit the principal when we are no more, if you will put it in my power to leave it to them — it will be gratefully acknowledged by

Your affectionate Wife

Judge Symmes

Susan Symmes —

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO ROBERT MORRIS

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

Cincinnati August the 22nd 1795.

My dear sir —

By the enclosed you will perceive that it is the wish of Mrs Symmes to sell out all her interest in the bank of the United States, and in the loan office at New York where her six per cent and other stock lies, she has long been talking of this, in order to vest her money in the lands of this country with which she is not a little pleased, and of which she hears so much from day to day, from persons who apply to me for a description of the different parts of the country, with views either of purchasing, leasing, or of obtaining a share by donation in order to extend our settlements farther back in to the country. for as the fevers of the body are communicated by contact so the fevers of the mind become epidemic when a rage for some particular object breaks forth, and all with the vortex thereof are swept away by its fury, no matter what, a crusade, mineing, banking, funding, South sea, Mississippi, Genesee, Miami, or some other speculating scheme, bursts like a contagion from the clouds and all are fuzed for the day with the madness. How much, or where, is Mrs. Symmes money, I never enquired,

## RELATING TO MRS. SUSAN SYMMES

but let it be where it may she wishes you to sell it out and lodge the proceeds in some bank where it can be drawn on our order. Will you do this sir? you have already general Letters of agency from me, if further or more special powers are wanting, do instruct me what to do, if other forms are required at the several offices than the common precedents furnish, draw a form in the smallest hand in writing on some of your very thin paper & transmit it to me by the post as soon as possible, for Mrs. Symmes is very anxious to have this business accomplished. I have waited with expectation for some time for a line by the post given me information of your receipt of my letter and draught on Colo. Hodgdon<sup>2</sup> by Samuel Tyler Esquire I wish to hear whether you have paid Elias Boudinot<sup>3</sup> Esquire the 40000 dollars as I desired, my debt due him being on interest since the first of November last. Mrs. Symmes set out yesterday on a visit to Mr. Shorts with her niece and baggage in a boat bound up Kentucky River under the care of Mr. Short who made us a visit last week, he left my two daughters in tolerable health, Mrs. Symmes is to spend her time with Mrs. Short untill I return from the Mississippi, for which Country I set out tomorrow with Governour St. Clair with an Escort of D[r]agoons from the army, we go in boats to the falls of Ohio & then march across the Country to St. Vincenes on the wabash where I hold a Circuit Court and then proceed by land across the country to the Illinois in Order to put the inhabitants of that part of the Territory in some order for it seemes they are all in confusion at present, a Circuit Court must be held at Kaskaskia also; this tour will take up about twelve weeks of my time this coming fall, & to be sure I can ill enough spare it being wanted extremely at home to conduct my buildings — as I am now beginning my house at North-Bend, having had carpenters all summer building my barn, which is now almost finished and a noble one, it is 50 feet long & 30 feet wide with 16 feet posts all round shingled roof and boarded sides. We have now for the first time some little exp[ect]ation that Mr Short

<sup>2</sup>Colonel Samuel Hodgdon, quarter-master general for St. Clair's campaign. H.P.S.O. *Quarterly*, vol. XVII, nos. 1 & 2, p. 22 (note 24).

<sup>3</sup>Elias Boudinot, President of the Continental Congress and involved with Judge Symmes in the Miami Purchase. *Symmes Correspondence*, Bond, ed., *passim*.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

will come & settle in the purchase, he has in pursuance of this Idea advertized all his farms in Kentucky for leasing or sale as applicants may prefer —

I beg sir that you will inform yourself with regard to the monies and stock of Mrs. Symmes, she is very impatient to have this business in train and made it her last Command when she took leave of me for Mr. Shorts. do not my Dear Sir let my absence abroad prevent your writing me, for by when your Letters reach this I shall have returned if I am not exhaled to heaven in the unhealthy fogs of the Mississippi, as young frogs are said to be, If I am, I doubt whether I shall have the good luck to be rained down again. I enclose you a draught on Wheelan and Miller for one thousand dollars, draw this money and out of it pay to Jonathan Dayton Esqr the balance due him on a bond he has against Doct- Calvin Morrel & Doct Budd, for land sold by Capt Dayton to Morrel, I have given Morrel his deed therefor & have pledged myself to, Capt Dayton<sup>4</sup> for the payment of Morrells money it differs not much of three hundred 20 or 30 dolrs the residue of the above 1000 dollars after Morrells bond is paid, please to pay to one of the Mr Boudinots Elias or Elisha<sup>5</sup>, or Mr W. Peartree Smith who ever may have the most occasion for it, as they are all of the same family let them agree who shall have it. I should be able to make you another remittance this fall were it not for my present tour to the Mississippia, but as it is I do not expect I can, as It will be November before I return & perhaps Christmas —

Not having seald . 26th Augt 95 till now, I bid you goodnight. Govr St Clair & myself set out in the morning for our voyage we are now at Northbend. left Cincina. Yesterday

My pen intollerable farewell

John C. Symmes

[Addressed:] Honble Robert Morris Esqr New Brunswick New Jersey

fayord by Ezra Fitz Freeman Esqr.

<sup>4</sup>Jonathan Dayton, a native of New Jersey and speaker of the U. S. Congress, 1795–1799. He was personally interested in the Miami Purchase. *Ibid.*, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup>Elisha Boudinot, a younger brother of Elias, who also was interested in the Miami Purchase. *Ibid.*, p. 210 (note 23).

# RELATING TO MRS. SUSAN SYMMES

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO ROBERT MORRIS

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

Cincinnati 22d. of December 1795

Dear Sir —

And now for a little domestic chat. — My family in all its branches my brothers included are in pretty good health — Last fall my brother lost by a sort of gout or cramp his second son by his present wife, a promising Lad of about twelve.

My Daughter Nancy is married to a Captain Harrison of the army, a son of the late Govn. Harrison of Virginia — they have their residence in fort Washington. We have begun our house, I have employed four Carpenters for a year, they are providing timber daily. Mrs. Symmes is much pleased with her plan, it is her own — the length 44 feet, breadth 40. — first story 11 feet. the second 10. stone cellar under the whole. Piazza in front two story high 14 feet long & 7 wide not to cover any of the front windows. there is to be two rooms on the first floor 18 feet by 20. — a Parlour and Bed-room, my Office 12 by 14. the common Dwelling room 20 by 22. a back entry whence rise the stairs 10 by 20. between the parlour and my office apantry of 6, by 12, another pantry between the two chimneys at the [opposite] end of the House 4, by 12, with a door opening into each adjoining room. three doors opening opposite to each other from front to rear. the upper rooms are to be pretty near of the same dimensions with the lower. the common access will be in the rear of the House, the front is to be rendered sacred by a paling round the court-yard and none are to be admitted but fairies and favorites. But after all we have not fixed on the favor'd spot of ground distin'd to bear up the fabrick — And this is matter of no small discussion some situations are too high, some too low — from some the River is eclipsed by a rising ground, a point of woods, or perhaps some unsightly Cabbins of logs, at others no good spring at hand, or perhaps too much in the midst of the Village, or too remote from it, a world of difficulties to be sure — but preparations are making fast to set it somewhere — will you advise where?

Last fall I spent two weeks with Mrs. Short, she enjoys tolerable



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

health. Mrs. Symmes was with her about two months, she has two sons the eldest robust, the younger not so, she has never as yet made us a visit at Miami, but it is expected that when our house is finished; expecially as her Sister is now settled here, we shall have that pleasure in about one year more — Mrs. Symmes was delighted with Mr Shorts situation and plenty. I sincerely congratulate you on the Marriage of Miss Morris and Mr. Boggs — am sorry that Mrs. Boggs should be afflicted even with a love pain, please to present them with my kind regards — and my respects to others of my acquaintances — I beg sir, that you will send me the necessary blank powers, for transferring Mrs. Symmes's Bank stock, she can then fill them up as she likes, I can do much better for her with the proceeds, than letting it lie in the Bank. Do you ever hear what is going on at flat-brook, our rents from that quarter as grain is so high must or ought to be considerable — I left it in the instructions of Holmes & Pemberton to forward me once a year at least a true statement of the rents received & Disbursements, but I have not received a line from them since I saw them, please to give them a hint that I expect a long letter from them by the post. — If any person or persons come to pay money to you on my account, please to receive it, as I have made some contracts with Jersey people wherein it is stipulated that payment made either to you or me is well made. give them receipts if you please that I may know how far to supply them with land.

Northbend January 23rd 1796.

This has been lying by me a whole month waiting for Doctr John Henry's return to Jersey, he sets from this tomorrow. Mrs Symmes is now on a visit to Mrs Harrison, but I hear she is well. I beg my respects to all friends, and am with much esteem,

sir Your most obedient servant

John Cleves Symmes.

Honble Robt Morris Esqr. New Brunswick

RELATING TO MRS. SUSAN SYMMES

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO ROBERT MORRIS

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

Northbend feby 28th 1796.

Dear sir —

We are going on with our house, materials are preparing fast, we have concluded to build on the Miami, three quarters of a mile from the Ohio, the village of North Bend occupies this space, we have the Miami river in Front, on a western view, to the North I have a mile of beautiful level bottom land, along the east bank of the Miami about 200 acres, this bottom is skirted along the east by a range of hills covered with timber, and from which 3 rivulets descend & cross the bottom; between the House & the Miami are about 10 acres perfectly level, on the left or rather south of which is a woods divided by a never failing small stream of water which passes by the South end of our house at the distance of 40 feet, with the addition of a very fine Spring, about 10 feet beyond the brook or 50 feet from the house; this brook as it divides the wood in its way leaves about 3 acres of the grove a perfect level next to the intended garden & courtyard, this small wood & the brook terminating together at the Miami —

Mrs. Symmes has her health pretty well, & gets more & more reconciled every day to the Country as her house advances in preparations; she begs her Compliments to you & yours — You will observe she assists me sometimes as a Clerk — I am in great want of a young man who has been bred to the farming business, and who can write, & keep my accounts in my absence, can work himself some & make those over whom he superintends work still more —

My two eldest Nephews I have settled away from me already, & intend to settle off the third not long first, when I shall have no superintendant. If you can send me a good one I will pay him great wages, & if he stays with me a few years & pleases me, over & above his wages I will give him a good Plantation —

I am dear Sir With much Respect Yours

John Cleves Symmes.

P.S. This moment the sheriff of Hamilton County arrived at my



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

house and informs me that our Jail, in Cincinnati, the walls of which were by far the strongest in America, is entirely consumed by fire, supposed to be wilfully burned by the prisoners.

J C S

Judge Morris —

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO ROBERT MORRIS

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

Northbend 2nd March 1796.

Dear Sir —

I do not know sir, what Mrs Ridley means by her insinuations that I seek to wrong her children. I abhor the Idea as much as she can possibly grieve about it, and it is owing to her own omission that she has not received ere this, all she is seeking respecting those certificates. I wrote her long since that if she would forward to me ready draughted, such powers as she wanted, if Mrs Symmes approved of them, I would sign & send them back to her, but I shall not undertake to draught the powers, for I may thereby commit myself, they ought not to be general, but special for certain certificates. Mrs Ridley is not candid when she assigns Mrs Symmes's sudden marriage as the cause of the transfer being neglected by her. — the ladies had been expecting me at Baltimore two months before I arrived, and Mrs Ridley was displeased that I took Miss Livingston from Baltimore before marriage, though she gained more than a month longer therein to have her business settled to her mind. And while Miss Livingston was in Philadelphia on our way to N York she transferred two thousand four hundred dollars to Mrs Ridley unknown to me. Nor to this day should I have been acquainted with the transaction but from strangers who were privy and suspected imposition on me. I said nothing however to Miss Livingston, neither before nor after marriage respecting this mysterious secrecy, until I was assailed on the present subject. It was natural sir, that some surmisings of unfair play should arise in my mind, especially when I recollected how exceedingly pressing Mrs Ridley was with Miss Liv-

## RELATING TO MRS. SUSAN SYMMES

ingston on my first overtures, that Susan should transfer *all* her (Susans) property to Mrs Ridley or to her two daughters, not a word was then said of Miss Livingston holding stock which belonged to Mrs Ridley or her daughters & Mrs Ridley is mistaken on this point — otherwise than as was urged by Mrs Ridley that Susan had promised all her fortune to Mrs Ridleys children. She afterwards claimed the property by a stronger lien than Mrs Symmes's pleasure or promise. How has all this happened? why not inform me on my arrival if fair play was intended? if Miss Livingston held Mrs Ridley's property, what temptation to keep it a secret since there could be no offence therein to God or man? I had no secrets in my concerns that I wished to conceal from them. If Miss Livingston knew that she was under a legal or even a morral obligation to transfer to her sister, stock of any kind, when we were four days together at Philadelphia, why not mention it to me? I certainly should have assisted her in the business with pleasure, and while she was in the act of transferring, why not transfer *all* that was due to Mrs Ridley, when in Philadelphia where, it seems the business must yet be done? Miss Livingston was a month after this at New York where she certainly had leisure to recollect herself, and if any thing had been omitted by her while in Philadelphia, she had time sufficient before marriage to have corrected it, and Mrs Ridley had abundant time to have enquired of her sister by letter before our connection. whether the property is Mrs Ridleys or Mrs Symmes's I shall not enquire, nor do I care — but I am not much pleased with their former silence on the subject and present clamors, whereby I am to be made the dupe of their designs. Had the ladies ingenuously informed me when at Baltimore how their pecuniary matters were blended, and that some arrangement therein was necessary, I would cheerfully have been their humble servant and assisted them all I could in stating matters right, but it seems all must be kept hidden from me (as they thought) until after my marriage, when lo! it was discovered that three fourths of the property held in the name of Susan Livingston belonged to Mrs Ridley, who had often been represented as a distressed widow. On the whole it is matter of indifference to me who is the real owner If Mrs Ridley forwards the powers



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

leaving no blanks therein for me to fill, and Mrs Symmes approves of them, I will set my seal & signature thereto — have them acknowledged — duly certified — and return them immediately. After Mrs Symmes makes up her mind respecting her stock and its present ebbing price, you shall hear from us on that subject, — I think it not improbable but you may see me in New Brunswick in the course of next summer — I must ascend the Ohio as far as Marietta to attend Court, and when there I shall have passed the worst half of the route. several things call me to the atlantic states, with others, the sale of all our property on flatbrook is contemplated. I learn that lands bear a good price in Jersey, will you beat the bush for a chap? about 1500 acres of good land, well improved, lying in 9 or 10 farms. also a good house & lot in New Town — to which you may add solitude if you please. all productive and under good leases — business with government — with Mr Boudinot — with Governor Lee<sup>6</sup> — Capt Dayton, and many other objects of smaller import, among which shopping for cloathing and groceries for my family, & materials for my house. The pleasure of seeing my friends will compensate me for much of the toil to which this tour must subject me — but thanks to God, I am in perfect health, and if continued I can endure much fatigue. Mrs Symmes has no wish to accompany me. her mind is too much engrossed by her new house and the education of her niece. Mrs Symmes and her niece are well & desire their best respects, to Judge Morris and family. I hear Mrs Harrison is not very well. she has become an inhabitant of fort washington. Mrs Short is in tolerable health, & has two fine boys running about her. she is become very domestic, seldom going abroad. Nothing would be more pleasing to me than to have my daughters settled near me but this is an event doubtful — If I knew what to make of Capt Harrison, I could easily take proper arrangements for his family, he can neither bleed, plead, nor preach, and if he could plow I should be satisfied. his best prospect is in the army, he has talents, and if he can dodge well a few years, it is probable he may become conspicuous.

<sup>6</sup>Probably Thomas Sims Lee, governor of Maryland, 1779–1783 and 1792–1794, and an important Revolutionary leader. *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. XI, New York, 1933, p. 132.

## RELATING TO MRS. SUSAN SYMMES

I beg sir, you will make my kindest respects to Yours, & my friends and acquaintances in New Brunswick. John has not yet come to town, when he arrives I will advertise you. will you give him your granddaughter to wife? if so, I will make my eldest servant swear to go and fetch her, as father Abraham did to provide a wife for the son of *his* old age.

I am with great esteem & respect Yours

John Cleves Symmes

Judge Morris.

[Addressed:] Honble Robert Morris Esqr New Brunswick, New Jersey. Recommended to the care of the Honble Aaron Ketchel to lodge it in the post office Philadelphia.

## SUSAN SYMMES TO ROBERT MORRIS

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

North Bend March 4, 1796

Sir

I feel myself greatly embarrassed, & distressed at addressing a Gentleman so much a Stranger to me, & upon so delicate a subject, & nothing but my confidence in the benevolence of your disposition; & the apparent necessity for vindicating my own & Sisters character should have induced me to trouble you upon this occasion — Happening to cast my eye this morning over a paper that the Judges's nephew was reading, & observing my own name, it excited a curiosity to join in the perusal, when to my surprise I found it to be a letter from the Judge in answer to one of yours respecting Mrs. R. business; in which I find he labours under several mistakes — It will doubtless appear singular to you, that I should not rather endeavour to convince him than you — & I think myself obliged to assign the reasons, one is, that the Judge has not been pleased to communicate your letter or his answer; tho' the most important is, least the *ungrateful* subject should bring altercation, & interrupt that harmony which I wish ever to maintain —



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

He asserts that I transferred the 2400 dol. at Phil, when on my way thro' to N.Y. with him, (which was some time in June or July) — The fact is they were transferred the preceeding Spring at Baltimore, the certificates being on the books at Annapolis, could not I beleive have been transfered at Phil — This transaction I acquainted Mr. S. with, no person being *privy* to it, tho I had no objection to its being public, & at the same time shewed him my accounts which was within a very few days after our marriage — & told him that the certificates (on the books of Pennsylvania) which I then shewed him, were Mrs. R. & that I must make them over to her before I left the Country — His displeasure was great, he insisting upon it that it was all a gift of mine — There was no more occasion to inform Mr. S before our union that I pd. Mrs. R. than that I had pd. my other Sisters & Brothers — The monies which I received for her previous to my living with her at Baltimore she desired me to do what I thought proper with, & vest in what property I pleased, unluckily it was at a time there was so great a rage for stock; I paid for the 4 shares I had in the U.S. bank upwards of a thousand pounds, it being at that time sixty or seventy per cent advc. in the month of Jany. as the failures took place in the Spring following. Mr. S. saw the account with the list of the other property I had & yet says I gave Mrs. R. three fourths of my property — It was my intention to settle with her whenever stock rose that I could sell to advantage, & either divide the profits (if any accrued) with her or pay her the sums I had received on her account with interest from the time of receiving them. The Spring I made over the 2400 dollars certificates were selling at 16s & Mrs. R. took them at par, so that she should complain if any one — I never made a mystery of any thing, I always told the Judge that my fortune was inconsiderable, but that Mrs. R. & myself, by living together could be comfortable & independant — when conversing about property so shortly after our marriage he told me he had been informed I had six thousand pounds, & was greatly disappointed to find that I had not the half — that was no fault of mine — Certain it is that I have never spent a shilling either of his money or what was mine, but have been a prudent, industrious, obedient wife, accommodating myself entirely to his

## RELATING TO MRS. SUSAN SYMMES

manners & way of life, which are very different from what I have been accustomed to before our marriage — The transition was great indeed! & unspeakable is my mortification to find Mrs. R. opinion of the Judge better founded than mine — Mrs. R. is a woman of the strictest veracity, & most rigid honor, & would not lay claim to property which was not her right —

What I have said on this subject to you Sir, I have never hinted to any one of my own family — Your own delicacy will suggest to you the propriety of keeping the contents of this letter a most sacred secret —

I am Sir With the greatest Respect Yours —

Susan Symmes —

North Bend March 4th. 1796 —

[Addressed:] Cincinnati The Honble. Judge Morris New-Brunswick New-Jersey —Post pd.

### JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO ROBERT MORRIS

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

[North Bend,] April 6th. 1796.

These two copies are in confidence, that my friend may be relieved of his pains on my account, — is there the most distant hint in these that Mrs R was the proprietor of any part of the property held by S.L.? is not the very reverse the language? is Mrs R represented in any other light than as depending on the generosity of Miss L.? The ground of opposition that I took — 'tis time enough to give property away conclusively, when Miss L. had no farther occasion for it, which could not be ascertained till death. — I always told the ladies, I did not stand in need of it myself — that Miss L. might have children — she might be unfortunate — she might change her mind — & that there was quite as much danger that Mrs R. would again marry a gentleman who would again waste her fortune, as there was that I should squander it, even though Miss L trusted it in my power.

Judge Morris

adieu, J C S.



# INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

[SUSAN LIVINGSTON SYMMES TO  
JOHN CLEVES SYMMES]

[*copy*]

January 30th 1794

Accept my thanks my good friend for your letter of the 22nd January I can readily imagine it must be very irksome to you to be detained such a length of time in Philadelphia, I had concluded you were at Morris long since. With respect to your enquiry how you are to proceed in arrangements &c Mrs R. was surprised when I informed her of my determination on the morning of your departure. After serious deliberations we agree in opinion that it will be the most prudent measure for you to permit us to manage our little pecuniary concerns between ourselves — the unforeseen difficulties she has encountered makes her anxious on my account, more than selfish considerations: Can you be so disinterested as to agree to this requisition, only allowing me to reserve 2 or 300 pounds for present exigencies? two other propositions I submit to your approbation, the first to leave me one year at Morris, sister R will stay with me there during your absence or take a house in N.Y. for the winter & have me with her which ever will appear most eligible — the second, to bring me back after residing 3 years in the western country to settle in Jersey: Mrs R promises a visit to the *Miamis*. should these propositions meet your concurrence, you can make your arrangements as you judge proper.

I beg my friend that you will consider well, that there may be no room for after regrets — Have you heard from Mrs Short, and does she flatter you with the expectation of a visit in the spring? Hope you have received more favorable accounts of Miss Nancys health,

I am sir with esteem your friend.

S L

SUSAN LIVINGSTON SYMMES TO  
JOHN CLEVES SYMMES

[*copy*]

Feby 10 — Baltimore 94.

Permit me my friend once more to intrude upon your patience & *waste* so much of your time as to endeavor to clear myself of the

## RELATING TO MRS. SUSAN SYMMES

heavy charges brought against me in your letter of the 4th february.

I never manifested any distrust of your circumstances, in the first letter you wrote me, you said your fortune was sufficient & I had the fullest confidence in your word. — what I proposed respecting mine was merely to relieve a sisters anxiety whose income was insufficient without the addition of mine, and judging it could be no object with you: how this can be construed into self love I cannot see. I think it would have been an act of great generosity in both of us. I am sorry you are obliged to recur to ages back to find love matches. I see them daily among my acquaintances, altho in many cases previous settlements & stipulations take place, either at the request of parents, friends or the desire of the gentleman. doubtless many connections are founded in interest — for my own part I never would give my hand where I was not attached upon any consideration. I think an Union founded on esteem promises the most happiness, as that will remain when passion declines: I am sorry you have so mistaken my Ideas upon the subject, and still more, that having been flattered with your good opinion, I should be so unfortunate as to forfeit it. as to the plan of living at Morris about a twelve month & then to be fetched to the Miamis, and after a few years residence there (to arrange your affairs) to return to Jersey, it was precisely your own plan the morning of your departure do you not recollect that you said you would write to Mr Short to come to Morris & you would protract your stay as long as possible — and when in your last but one you talked of gardening, I presumed you meant at Morris —

I have only one proposal more to make, which is that you do just as you wish in the matter. Your will shall be mine. I know not what more I can say. If you *choose* to go alone to the miamis — my best wishes shall accompany you. Indeed my friend your letter has wounded my feelings more than ever I expected they would have been by you. since mine has offended you forget the contents, and be assured I erred with the best intentions in consequence of a promise made Mrs R. before I thought of changing my situation; However that may be, in this I am clear that I am with esteem & affection Your friend



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

[MRS.] S. SYMMES TO CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

[*Sou. Hist. Collection*]

Albany May 17th 1815 —

A tardy acknowledgment of a favour is seldom regarded, but where it is attended though at a late day, with feelings similar to those with which it was at first received, I hope it will not be unacceptable; since it is thus proved to have been only delayed, not forgotten. Let me thank you now, then Sir, for your kind & interesting letter, which undoubtedly excited in me emotions of grateful pleasure, beyond what you, ((lightly estimating your own kindness) expected, & beleive, that tho many of your friends might better compensate you for your letters, few could more highly value them.

Be assured I accept with no common pleasure, the kind offer of hearing through the medium of your pen, of the health & situation of our friends, & connections in Cincinnati, & its vicinity; and also to convey to them my kind regards, & tender solitudes. Before I proceed, to Mrs Harrison (for whom I retain an affection as fervent as ever distinguished my attachments,) I beg an affectionate remembrance: what innumerable tender recollections are associated with that name! And is it possible that for more than six years, I have had no communion with her that bears it! This is at once my misfortune & my grief; whether I have deserved or not, to forfeit her esteem, the suspension of our epistolary intercourse will be a subject of unceasing regret. Your excellent Father, & Genl Harrison, are among the number of those who share my high regard, & esteem, and I beg them to accept the tribute of my friendship.

How greatly has the return of Peace changed the aspect of our affairs, both public & private; instead of gloomy apprehensions, when the future was forecast with forebodings of evil to us, now with the return of peace comes smiling prospects of security, of successful industry, of virtuous youths trained to better prospects than the slaughter of human beings; and happy old age, its evening sun no longer obscured by tears, for them who should have tenderly soothed, and solicitously watched its decline! How does

## RELATING TO MRS. SUSAN SYMMES

peace, sweet peace brighten every object! Amidst all the joys attending this delightful state of things, how should our hearts bow with fervent thankfulness to the Author of all our mercies, that war has made no inroads in our extended family circle; and our rejoicings are unsullied with a tear! Had any beloved friend or relative been a victim, how bitter would have been the alloy, but now our cup is one, of unmingled joy, & blessings.

Upon the intelligence of a renewal of the commotions in Europe, my first emotion was gratitude that our Country was sheltered from the storm, in the bosom of peace. With the French Nation we can have no sympathies; they have chosen darkness rather than light: Their vanity is the Moloch to which they sacrifice, as long as the Chariot wheels of *la grande Nation* can move on triumphantly, they care not how their bodies are torn, and broken in the conflict.

Among the various comforts & enjoyments which a kind Providence has indulged me with, I esteem it not the least, that my lot has been cast in a family, whose perfect agreement of sentiments, & principles unite us to each other. The instruction of little Theodore who has just entered his fifth year, is one of my delightful employments, & amusements, & I suspect his progress in infantine literature, is rather beyond most children of that age, his mind has developed much the last six months, he has read several books well calculated to cultivate the \* \* \* affections, & teach humanity to animals & \* \* \* & is now commencing the Parent's assistant by Miss \* \* \* worth. He with his parents are now on a visit to Mrs Watts (Mrs. Sedgwick's sister) in West Chester County. I anticipate the same pleasure on their return, which is expected in the course of 4 or 5 weeks. The summer I shall divide between Mr. Watts', Mr. Jay's, & Judge Livingston's & I hope you will indulge me with the happiness of receiving a letter from you, directed to the care of my brother in the City. I can scarcely realize that your brother John & Betsey H——n should be married, so lately does it seem that they were children; nothing shews the lapse of time more, than children becoming men & women. The last time that I saw your Sister Anna, she was begging Grandma for "yags to sew" — I wish them, you, & all our dear friends better blessings



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

than time or earth can bestow — remember me kindly to all our friends in *mass* since my paper does not permit to mention them particularly, & beleive me with sincere

affection yours.

S. Symmes.

[Addressed:] Charles W. Short Esqr To the care of John Short Esqr Cincinnati State of Ohio —

PART IV

CHIEFLY CORRESPONDENCE,  
JOHN CLEVES SYMMES AND ROBERT MORRIS

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO ROBERT MORRIS<sup>1</sup>

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

Southold [Long Island] june 2nd 1769

Dear Sir —

I know of Nothing which I flatter myself I Can Inform you of which will better please than that I am well. I have Employed most of my time in Diverting myself Since I Came from Newark, with the rest of my performances I have Concerted a Method of writing for my private Designs, a specimen give me leave to present you who I know are Curious ———

[Symbols indecipherable] \* \* \* if you Sir Can Construe the above you will have the two first lines in a tragedy which I have attempted. favour me with at least 3000 lines that I may have the happiness of perusing one Every hour Untill I See you which I Expect will be in July being in Utmost haste give me leave to Subscribe your humble

Jno Cleves Symmes

[Addressed:] To Mr Robert Morris att Newark favoured by Doct Henchman

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO ROBERT MORRIS

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

Springfield [N. J.] the 10th of March 1778

Dear Sir —

I have been informed by David Board at whose house I Lodged in My way home, that a Court of Oyer & Terminer is soon to be

<sup>1</sup>For Robert Morris, see Introduction, *ante*, p. xxvi (note 14).



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

held in the County of Bergen, and I am also told by the people in this place that one is soon to be Called in Essex, if these Reports are true, I beg sir that you will advertise me of the day appointed in the Commission that I may order my business so as to give my attendance, I wish to go to Sussex as soon as My business will permit but think it not prudent to go Until I hear from You on the subject, please to honor me with a line by Capt Meeker.

If Your honor or Mr Justice Smith expects to attend I should take it kind to be Informed.

O Gods, what a fine Girl I saw the other Day at Long Island,  
I have the honor to be sir yours devoutly

John Cleves Symmes

Honble Robert Morris Esqr

[Addressed:] Honorable Robert Morris Esquire Trentown by  
Capt Meeker

### JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO ROBERT MORRIS

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

Dear sir — It affords me [pleasure] that I have an opportunity of obliging an honest man, & helping my friend to a good tenant.

David Reeves the bearer, has been known to me for several years on Long Island, as an honest industrious man, well acquainted with husbandry to which business he was bred, within four miles of me. Has for several years worked for Silas Condict Esqr with approbation, since he left the Island, and justly merits the character of a sober, diligent, and honest farmer. As to property I think him able to go through with any rent he may ingage for, if the farm be worth the rent as he has considerable of money at Use.

I am sir with sincere regard.Yours

John Cleves Symmes

Nov. 11th 1782. Robert Morris Esqr

[Addressed:] Robert Morris Esqr *Morris Town*

# JOHN CLEVES SYMMES AND ROBERT MORRIS

## CATALOGUE OF BOOKS AMONG JUDGE SYMMES PAPERS, 1783

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

	No.	[Price]
Horace Transl'n . . . . .	19	
Ainsworth Lat. Dict. . . . .	29	60s
Dickinsons Letters . . . . .	30	
Gordons Cosmography . . . . .	31	
Wolastons Relign Nat. . . . .	32	20s
Boyen French Gram . . . . .	5	
Do Do Dicty . . . . .	37	
Martins Philosophy . . . . . 3 Vol . . . . .	54	
Preceptor . . . . . 2 Vol . . . . .	55	
Cambrays Dialogues . . . . .	65	10s
Kings history of the heathen Gods . . . . .	70	12s
Nature Displayed . . . . . 7 Vol 10s . . . . .	87	70s
Blailys Dictionary Folio . . . . .	90	60s
Huchison Xenophon . . . . .	118	
Gutherie Cicero Orations . . . . . 3 Vol . . . . .	119	
Royisards French Gram . . . . .	131	
Gordons Gography . . . . . 10s . . . . .	134	
Lelands Demothenes . . . . . 15s . . . . .	135	
Crusins Lives of the Rom. Poets 2 Vol 12s . . . . .	137	24s
Francis Horrace . . . . . 4 Vols 10s . . . . .	149	40s
Stanhopes Thomas a Kempis . . . . .	167	
Lord Litt'ns Remarks on the Conversion of St Paul . . . 12s . . . . .	170	
Franklin on Elictricity . . . . 7s6 . . . . .	205	
Wards Oratory . . . . . 2 Vol 16s is 30s . . . . .	208	
Brightlands English Gram . . . . .	210	
Universal History . . . . . 21 Vol 15s £15"15"0 . . . . .	217	
Salmons Gazetteer . . . . . 10s . . . . .	226	
Chambers Dicty & Supt . . . . . 4 Vol 80s £16"0"0 . . . . .	233	
Potters Mathemacticks . . . . .	40	
Taylors Do . . . . . 12s . . . . .	60	
Cockers Decimal Arithmk . . . 7s6 . . . . .	64	
Hammonds Algebra . . . . . 10s . . . . .	57	



# INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

	No.	[Price]
Sherwins Mathem: Tables.....	77	
Salmons Geograp.....	78	
Ronayrse [sic] Algebra.....7s6.....	81	
Atkinsons Epitomy of Nov 15s .....	82	
Wards Mathemat.....12s .....	83	
Newtons Principia.....20s .....	92	
Do.....3 Vol 30s is 90s....	241	
Do on Opticks.....25s .....	92	
Maclawtins Fluxions.....2 Vol 20s.....	93	40s
Do Algebra.....12s .....	94	
Stones Mathemat. Dicty...15s .....	97	
Ashbier Algebra.....7s6.....	103	
Martins Philos Gram.....20s .....	104	
Do Philos. Libr.....18s .....	105	
Do Decimal Arithmetic.18s .....	106	
Sanderrons Algebra.....20s .....	114	
Halleys Astronom Tables.....	197	
Wells Mathemat.....3 Vol 16s is 48s....	199	
Lawsons Oratory.....	211	
Calmets Dicty .....3 Vol 80s£16“0”0 .	235	
Locks Works.....3 Vol 60s£9“0”0..	238	
Montugnuns Spt. of Laws.....2 Vol.....	249	
Smiths Longinus.....	251	
Allens Demostenes.....2 Vol 16s.....	255	32s
Homer Elements of Criticism...3 Vol 16s.....	261	48s
Thompsons Seasons		
Catos Letters.....4 Vol 12s.....	267	48
Crudenes Concordance.....60s .....	308	
Grohis opera.....4 Vol if english 30s is£6“0”0	317	
Seldins Works .....3 Vol 80s is£12“0”0	319	
Miltons poetical Works with } ..4 Vol.....	324	
Newtons Notes 18s is 72s }		
Edwards on the Affections 12s .....	89	
Popes works.....6 Vol 12s 3“12”0...	262	
Recd. Jany 9th 1783 on account of the above books twenty nine pounds & nineteen shillings Proc.		

Jno. C Symmes

## JOHN CLEVES SYMMES AND ROBERT MORRIS

Recd. Feby 8th. 1783 on account of Books above thirteen pounds & twelve shillings Proc which is in full of those priced & carried out amounting to [£43“11”0]<sup>2</sup>

John Cleves Symmes

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO ROBERT MORRIS

[H.P.S.O.Mss.]

Marietta March 15th 1795.

Dear Sir —

Mr Abijah Hunt<sup>3</sup> will put into your hands two thousand six hundred and sixty one dollars of my money which I beg to trouble you with the charge of until I draw it out for fixed purposes.

Out of this sum pay to Elisha Boudinot Esqr. four hundred dollars & see that it be credited on my bond to him for land at Miami — please also to pay unto William Peartree Smith Esqr. two hundred & sixty one dollars & have the same credited on my bond to him for Miami lands — The remaining two thousand, I intend for Elias Boudinot, Danl Marsh & Jno. N Cummins Esqr<sup>4</sup> or such of them as I can treat successfully with respecting their lands at Miami — I have given the money to Mr Hunt as I received it in parcels, that in case there should be found any counterfeits I may know of whom I received it. I beg you to preserve this caution as far as you can — I left Mrs & Miss Symmes well on the 17th of last month, have had a 23 days voyage combating floods Ice & tempest in coming up the Ohio to meet St Clair the Governor on the business of legislation, he is not yet arrived, but if he does not come soon I shall put up helm & drop down the river to Miami, as it is mortifying in the extreme to be abroad.

<sup>2</sup>Even allowing for a credit of £43 11s from the sale of books from the above list, April 6, 1785, Judge Morris still owed Judge Symmes £40 on account. Account, August 8, 1782 — April 6, 1785, *Morris Correspondence* (H.P.S.O. Mss.)

<sup>3</sup>Abijah Hunt, a well known merchant of Cincinnati, was caught up by the speculative mania of the times, and moved to Natchez, Mississippi. There he died in a duel, the outcome of a “political altercation” with the delegate to Congress from Mississippi Territory. *Liberty Hall*, July 24, 1811; *Symmes Correspondence*, Bond, ed., p. 191 (note 200).

<sup>4</sup>John N. Cummings of the “state of New Jersey” was one of the proprietors of the reserved fractional townships. *Western Spy*, May 4, 1803; John Cleves Symmes to Peyton Short, April 8, 1804, *ante*, p. 66 (note 10).



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

There are some prospects of peace in this country. the Indians come in to Genl Wayne in numbers suing for peace while others are taking scalps, in different parts of the country — The fact is they are too barbarious to know what civilized nations understand by a peace — What faith of treaty can bind a young savage to omit an opportunity of taking a rifle-gun, a good horse or a blanket, all of which are vital & necessary articles to him, besides the honor he acquires by taking a scalp. I am not able to tell you how Mrs [Symmes] will like the country — she says that she must first have a new house and then she can better decide on the merits of the country and living at Miami.

Pray sir write to me & put your letter in the post office, a single sheet will cost me only  $\frac{1}{4}$  dollar postage — I beg my kind respects to your Nephews, & all friends & in particular to Miss Morris.

and am dear sir yours with every sentiment of friendship

J.C. Symmes

Honble Mr Morris.

Addressed: Honble Robert Morris Esqr New Brunswick New Jersey. to the care of Mr A Hunt

[ROBERT MORRIS TO JOHN CLEVES SYMMES]

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

June 9, 1795

Dr Sir

I recd. yours by Mr Hunt with the money, sent by him Viz-2661 Dolls. to the best of my recollection for I am here without minuents &c. I recd. it on the road returning home from Philada. & did not again look at it while I staid there, I have been on the wing almost ever since. I gave a special Acct. for it to Mr. Hunt, which he will give you. The first opportunity after I paid to Mr. Boudinot junr. & Mr. W.P. Smith the sums you directed the first I stoped on the Road & took a loose Acct. only with his promise to indorse it on the bond at his return. Mr. Smith both indorsed it & gave me a loose act: While I was in New York I lodged the remainder in the Branch Bank & I have the satisfaction to inform you that none was

## JOHN CLEVES SYMMES AND ROBERT MORRIS

there rejected as counterfeit, tho' I suspected some of the Past notes. Messrs. Boudinot & Smith were to give me notice if any paid them were bad — as yet I have recd. no such notice, so that as yet all is right.—My hurry after recieving this money will appologise to you for not acknowledging it by Post immediately after. —

Mr James Boggs who was on the Western Insurgent expedition informed me on his return that he met you & family near Bedford & that you had then much bad road to incounter, but bad as it was I find you got thro' it as my next account from you was from Cin-cinatus — Present me respectfully to Mrs. & Miss Symmes, I wish them health & every injoyant your *Paradise* is capable of affording, in other words I wish they may find it the Eden you discribe it. — Mrs. Jay &c were well three weeks since.

News — Mr. Jay is returned, is elected Govr. of New York & must accept, who will supply his place? If a legal character from the bench, our friend Mr Paterson is the man; if the consequence of States is to produce him Virginia or Massachusets must furnish one. The Senate are in session on the treaty, nothing transpired.

European intelligence not detailed beyond which the publick prints contain.

Domestic [news] Robt. Boggs married to Miss Polly Morris John Dittart & Archd. Stewart no more.

I am thus brief as Mr. Hunt goes in the morning. I am just arrived here and business calls me.

Your money will rest in the Bank untill I have your orders for the appropriation, with my best wishes to you your family & Mrs. Short I am with regard

Your very humble Servt  
R M

Philada. June 9th. 1795. Judge Symmes.

## JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO ROBERT MORRIS

[H.P.S.O.Mss.]

Cincinnati june the 22nd 1795.

Dear sir,

I have not seen Mrs Symmes these two weeks past, she is at Northbend, and I am here attending the legislature. I shall go



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

home this after-noon. she writes me however that she is well. I think if we had a good house, it would not make Mrs Symmes at all unhappy to be told that she was never to see Jersey or N. York again. she seems only to wish to have Mrs Ridley come into the country, and her Joys would be full.

As for Miss Symmes, she is at Mrs Shorts, and has been there three months past. she writes me that she is much pleased with the country, & with the society in and about Lexington, but whether she is likely to settle soon or not is yet doubtful — A Mr Harrison, son of the late governor Harrison of Virginia, at present a captain in the army, and aid-de-camp to General Wayne, has made Nancy the offer of his hand, but he has not yet received an answer, at least, not from me, tho' I know not well how to state objections, save that as yet we are all too much strangers to each other, the young man has understanding, prudence, education, & resource in conversation, about £3000 property, but what is to be lamented is, that he has no profession but that of arms. He is the same young gentleman who waited on Mrs Genl Wilkinson to Philadelphia in 1792 or beginning of 93, perhaps you may have seen him there. If this connection takes place, I do not see but that Mr Harrison must settle in the Miami purchase, not having a farm in Kentucky, and land there is too high to purchase, considering how very precarious their title's are, but the reflection of the two sisters settling eighty miles apart is an unpleasant subject to me. tis true, I want the assistance of some young man in my own arrangements, and a son in law might perhaps be best of all. abilities he has, what his application may be I have yet to discover — On the whole, I must consult my daughters personally on the subject.

I saw Miss Mercer Yesterday at Church, she is well, and has made Mrs Symmes one visit. she is to make her another soon.

I beg sir, you will make my best respects to Miss Morris, & family, and present my compliments to Judge Patterson, Col Bayard and other gentlemen of my acquaintance in Brunswick when you can do it apropos. beg to hear from you as soon as convenient, the post office is at your door, and 25 cents only is the fare — a small sum to pay for so much pleasure, less pleasure has often cost more.

## JOHN CLEVES SYMMES AND ROBERT MORRIS

I have the honor to be with utmost respect, sir your most  
humble servant

John Cleves Symmes

Honble judge Morris

[Addressed:] Honble Robert Morris esquire at New Brunswick  
New Jersey by the care of Saml Tyler Esqr.

### DANIEL SYMMES<sup>5</sup> TO ROBERT MORRIS

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

Sir,

Enclosed I send you in behalf of John Cleves Symmes esquire  
Two Bills of One thousand dollars each, the one drawn on Messrs  
Whelen & Miller signed by John & Chr Wilkins & Co. dated  
Lexington 7th. Augt. 1795 — countersigned by Theos. Oliver  
payable to yourself ten days after date: The others drawn on  
Samuel Hodgdon esqr. for the like sum by Daniel Harrison belong-  
ing to the Qr. Ms. Ge. department dated Fort Washington 30th  
Oct.. 1795 payable to yourself fifteen days after date — Those  
moneys you will please to appropriate or retain as the case may be  
agreeable to your latest advises from Judge Symmes — He being  
now absent at the kaskaskia's requested me to remit all moneys to  
you which I might receive in his absence Capt. Israel Ludlow by  
whom I Write will deliver you this together with the inclosed Bills,  
would thank should opportunity present to drop a line whether  
you receive them safe —

I am Sir with the highest esteem your very hml ser't

Danl. Symmes

30th. Octr. 1795.

The Honle. Robert Morris esquire

[Addressed:] The Hon'le Robert Morris esquire New Brunswick  
State of Jersey By Capt Isl. Ludlow

<sup>5</sup>Daniel Symmes acted as his uncle's business agent, especially during the  
latter's frequent absences. *Cf.* Introduction, *ante*, pp. xxviii–xxix.



# INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO ROBERT MORRIS

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

Woodford County, Kentucky, November 4th 1795.

Dear Sir —

I beg sir, that you will be so good as to draw my quarters salary which becomes due the first of January next, and with it purchase the following articles of real plate for my two daughters, viz. two fashionable sugar dishes. two cream cups. twenty four table-spoons. twenty four tea-spoons. two pair of sugar-tongs. two soup-spoons. and eight small salt-cellar spoons. Let these be well put up, & if Capt Israel Ludlow will take charge thereof, it will be a fair opportunity to forward them. As I cannot precisely conjecture the price of these articles, should they exceed the two hundred dollars, pay it, and reimburse your self out of the first of my monies that comes to your hands. Last week I met with Mrs Symmes here, where she has spent her time with my daughters while I have been abroad. she is in good health, as are Mrs and Miss Symmes. they, with Mr Short, all join me in compliments to your family, and acquaintances in N. Brunswick.

We are much alarmed with an account of the Yellow fever being in New York. 30. or. 40. it is said die daily. Mrs Symmes is under great apprehensions for the safety of her relations in that City. God preserve them.

I hear that you are all in convulsions along the atlantic states. and Mr Jays treaty assailed and defended with impetuosity, situate so far from the field of battle, I am obliged to remain neutral; shall however be contented if I am able to hold the circuit Court at Detroit next summer. this, and this only, will give permanency to our late Indian-treaty.

There is a fine country as to soil, along the Mississippia, but very Unhealthy. every person in our company had the fever of the land, except myself and one more, though we had sixteen in our escort. five sixths of the country are mere plains, called prairies; some are 100 miles in length, and many are 20 and 30 miles over.

## JOHN CLEVES SYMMES AND ROBERT MORRIS

I beg sir, you will write me by every opportunity, and give me a sketch of politicks.

I am sir, with great regard, Your most obedient humble servant.

John Cleves Symmes.

Judge Morris. N. Brunswick

N.B. Mrs Short begs you to have the letter S. singly. put on her equal half, this serves as the initial of Symmes and Short.

Addressed: The Honble Robert Morris Esquire New Brunswick  
N. Jersey by Doct: Condict

### JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO ROBERT MORRIS

[*H.P.S.O.M*<sub>ss.</sub>]

Philadelphia 16th of December 1795  
No 20. South front street.

Dear sir —

Two or three days ago, Mr James Boggs put into my hand a check from you on the bank of Pennsylvania for five thousand dollars, for which I gave him a receipt. This came very seasonably as I had an opportunity of loaning it for 30 days to advantage, on such security as I approved. I can lend more money on the best security at a pretty good interest, and as I do not expect to have need of my money till spring, I would fain make it earn me my bread and butter this winter. I will thank you therefore sir, for another check as soon as may be, for as large a sum as you may suppose to be about my balance.

I left Mrs Symmes, Mrs Short, and Mrs Harrison in good health, and all together at Fort Washington, where Capt. Harrison has good quarters & commands.

Mrs Symmes and her niece Susan Ridley are to live with Mrs Harrison until my return.

Shall we have the pleasure of your company at Court this winter? I know not when I can spare time to come to New York; but when I do, my rout shall be through New Brunswick.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

I am as I have ever been, sir, Your respectful friend & humble servant.

Judge Morris.

John Cleves Symmes.

[Addressed:] Honble Robert Morris Esquire at Mrs Dobina's Wall street. New York.

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO SILAS CONDUCT<sup>6</sup>

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

Northbend, Feby. 28th. 1796.

Dear Sir

It is a common mistake that our Correspondents in Jersey run into, to believe that when they write a letter to this Country & put it into the Post office, it comes as fast as if tied about the neck of a pigeon that flies swiftly to us, from this unfounded opinion very great disappointments, & perhaps in some instances almost ruin may ensue. The fact is, that you ought never to expect an answer returned to a letter, from this Country, under six months from the time you lodge it in the Post office; the most direct & successful conveyance to & from would take up two months by a private hand; four months more are generally wasted by the inattention of the Post Masters on the route; our letters lie frequently for weeks in Cincinnati Post office before it is known at North Bend that any are there, & they make a halt at every Post office throughout the whole road. add to this, that the State of the Ohio frequently interrupts the progress of letters for several weeks, by being too high to ascend, too low to descend, or too full of ice to do either. hence it is that your favor of the 19th. of Decr. last never reached me till last evening. I now take the first moment to answer it, the Sun being not yet up & John Ketchel Esqr. now with us will take my letter to Cincinnati this day & put it in the Post office for you, under cover to A. Ketchel Esqr. Philadelphia.

Mrs. Symmes begs her compts. to Mrs. Conduct, yourself & family, to which please to add mine. my two daughters were in

<sup>6</sup>Silas Conduct of Morristown had had a prominent part in the Revolution, and evidently was a friend of long standing. John Whitehead, *The Passaic Valley, New Jersey*, New York, 1901, p. 127.

## JOHN CLEVES SYMMES AND ROBERT MORRIS

tolerable health some days ago. Nancy made rather a run away match of it, though she was married at my house in my absence. however some people say she has married a worthy young man. I hope I shall find him so. my greatest objection was that he was bred to no business, & therefore I can set him at none. I beg my respects to all your good neighbours of my acquaintance. Capn. Howells family are well & I believe most of your acquaintances in this Country — I am about building & have business enough on my hands — we have no news here — we lie snug beyond the tempests of politicks & the gay circles of pleasure — The whole Country is now busy in making Sugar from the Myrtle Tree.

I am sir with great regard your very humble Servt.

Silas Condict Esqr.

J: C. Symmes

(copy.)

## ROBERT MORRIS TO JAMES BOGGS

[*H.P.S.O.Mss.*]

May 17, 1796

D Sir

Yours of the 9th. inst. was handed me this day by your brother, who I understood recd. it by Mr. Smith. In my next I will Comment as far as necessary on the contents; at present I have time only for what follows, by Mr. Ludlow.

At my return hither on the evening of the 6th. April I found sundry letters from Judge Symmes, by one of which he instructs me to draw his quarter salary to the first of January & proceed in the following words — “and with it purchase the following — articles of real plate” [see *ante*, p. 100]

Now, my good Sir, I suppose you to be very busy, but I also suppose you can make leisure to order these things to be prepared accordingly by some Silver smith you can rely on by the time Mr. Ludlow goes, which will be in about five days after this reaches you by him. he will give you his address. — It is probable that the articles directed can be had for the two hundred dollars, & the spoons of a proper size & wt for service as your brother got



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

12 table & tea spoons, a soup Do. & sugar tongs for  $59 \frac{25}{100}$  Dols. viz. 12 table spoons @  $36 \frac{25}{100}$  Dolls. 12 tea Do. @ 10. Dol. soup Do. @ 10 Dol & sugar tongs @ 3. Dolls. & half the add'e. articles I should suppose would not reach the remaining  $40 \frac{75}{100}$  Dols. perhaps the table & tea spoons ought to be rather heavier than Roberts. I accordingly enclose you a check for the 200. Dolls. But should I be deceived and the amount exceed this you must pay it and deduct so much from the amount of the money recd. for the half years salary on the enclosed account & order when received and pay the remainder to my credit in the Pennsa. Bank.—.— I have seen Mr. Ludlow, & he has promised to take charge of the articles & deliver you this. It may be prudent to take his rect. for them to be delivered to Judge Symmes order; as a voucher to me; which I suppose he will not scruple to give. — We are all well & I with esteem Your very humble Servt.

Robt. Morris

New Brunswick May 17th. 1796 Mr. Boggs —

[Addressed:] Mr. James Boggs — No. 39 South Front Street Philadelphia Favored by Mr. Ludlow

ROBERT MORRIS TO JOHN CLEVES SYMMES

[*H.P.S.O. Mss.*]

Dr Sir

Enclosed you have a check for eighteen hundred dollars. the add'e. two hundred is occasioned by information from Mr. Jas. Boggs that he had only paid the balance of your Salary to my Credit in the bank instead of the whole. — Whereby I suppose you ought to have had this two hundred there more than you had. — I have this day negotiated for remitting the money I last recd. of Danl. Dotry by the hands of Stephen Crane to Philada. by an order that has ten days to run. — When Mr Boggs will pay you the balance which by that time I am in hopes to get leisure to Ascertain & forward your Account. But as all my payments to

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES AND ROBERT MORRIS

You hitherto has been by guess I hope you will be prepared to refund if I should have overpaid. As I now want every dollar I own —

With respect & Regard I am Sir Your very humble Servt.

Robt. Morris:

New Brunswick Jany 3d. 1797 —

Many happy years to you

Judge Symmes

Addressed: The Honble John Cleves Symmes Esqr. [per] Mr. Boggs  
Philadelphia



PART V

MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO GEORGE WASHINGTON

[*by permission from copy in the Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif. G R 549*]

Morris Town, the 17th. April 1780.

Sir,

I have the honor to inform your Excellency, that William London of the Artillery who was indicted for the murder of Richard Savage; upon trial, was acquitted of the murder and found guilty of manslaughter; he has been allowed his clergy, and burned in the hand pursuant to his judgement; and having gone through every stage of the civil Law, is now remanded to the Provost guard, where he waits your Excellency's pleasure.<sup>1</sup>

I have the honor to be with great Respect, your Excellency's devoted most obedient humble Servant.

His Excellency

John Cleves Symmes.

Genl. Washington

(Endorsed) 17th. April, 1780. from *General Greene*.

<sup>1</sup>As a colonel in the New Jersey militia, John Cleves Symmes upheld military discipline, but on occasion he fought for the soldiers' rights as well. George Washington to Governor Livingston, February 19, 1780; and to John Cleves Symmes, March 7, 1780, *Writings of Washington*, Jno. C. Fitzpatrick ed. vol. 18, Washington, 1937, pp. 28-31 and p. 80; *N.J. Historical Society Proceedings*, second series, vol. V, pp. 25-32.

# MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO  
[RICHARD CLOUGH ANDERSON]<sup>2</sup>

[*H.P.S.O. Mss.*]

Near Danville, June 21st 1787.

I am now my dear sir at the house of Mr Robt Caldwells, whose family I find hospitable & kind. I mentioned in my last that the horse which Carpenter rode had foundered on the road, as he still continues lame, I have this day swaped him away with Mr. Caldwell for one which will I hope do my business very well, we shall set out for Lexington tomorrow if the weather be good.

The letters I mentioned to you as having missed me and gone to Louisville, was brought back by Capt Easton, I enclose you one of them from Col. Lee, the other is from the Chief justice, of New Jersey, perhaps you might have known him when in the army, Colonel Brearly, but he writes me little, however on reading it over, I will enclose that also for the sake of Col. Philips if he should be so happy as ever to fall in your way. I beg you will preserve Col. Lees letter, as I shall like to be possest of every document that has ever had existence on the subject of Imlay, contract with me in case I should ever be obliged to resort to the law for my demands —

The western Government it seems by Lees letter is approaching, I have already taken the liberty to mention to you that I had views of accepting some appointment therein, I persuade myself that I stood fair when I left New York for no inconsiderable appointment, It seems they have not forgot me.

But the doubtful situation in which I stand with one of your fair friends distracts me, I would not wish to come into the country to see her in the possession of another, and I have not the smallest foundation to believe that she has any partiality for me, indeed

<sup>2</sup>Richard Clough Anderson, a native of Hanover County, Virginia with a notable Revolutionary record, was appointed surveyor-general to apportion the land reserved in Kentucky and the Northwest Territory for the Virginia Continental troops. His home, "Soldier's Retreat" near Louisville, became an important social center and he himself was a notable figure in pioneer life. *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. I, New York, 1928, pp. 270-271; E. L. Anderson, *Soldier and Pioneer, A Biographical Sketch of Lt.-Col. Richard C. Anderson*, New York, 1879.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

she tells me that she has not as pointedly as she can utter herself, And tho I will not deny but that I have yet some gleam of hope, I know it is far more an evidence of my weakness, than the result of any just conclusions which I draw from circumstances and appearances. In short I am angry with myself that I cannot forget her.

Mr Lacasange is sighing to Miss Sally Christian, so Mrs Innes informs me, tho I did not hear of it till Mr Lacasange was gone from Danville. I think it will be a very good match by what I can learn, tho I have not had the pleasure to see Miss Christian —

Please to make my respectful compliments to the family of Mr. Clarke, Could I balloon it, I would meet you there next Saturday, for Sunday I expect must be devoted by the ladies to the visits of other gentlemen, and why should I envy Any those pleasures which are forbidden to me, as I most certainly should do were I present.

with the highest esteem and sincere regard,

I have the honor to be Yours.

John C. Symmes.

Colonel Anderson

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO  
[RICHARD CLOUGH ANDERSON]

[*H.P.S.O. Mss.*]

Lexington the 27th june 1787.

I have this moment dismounted in this place and the first thing I set myself about my dear sir is to compile a packet for You and the rest of my friends — I left Danvill last friday afternoon, rode twelve miles that evening to a Mr Mc Murtrys, the next morning I crossed Tods ferry four miles below the mouth of Dicks River and went on to Col. Marshals, where I have been till this afternoon, and even now I had the greatest difficulty to break away from the Colonel, so great was his hospitality.

Yesterday I was invited to dine with Major Crettenton if I can spell his name, he had a large company of gentlemen and

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

ladies of his neighbours Around, I had the pleasure there to meet my old acquaintance Mrs Wilkinson,<sup>3</sup> I waited upon her this morning & took breakfast with her, she appears to be very cheerful, and promises herself the pleasure of seeing the General in August, however I think she must sleep a little longer than that alone.

I am not yet certain what the number of our company will be through the wilderness,<sup>4</sup> but am told it is supposed to be about thirty. We repair tomorrow to Strowds station twenty miles from this where they rendezvous — there are several already in this Town.

I have taken the liberty to enclose a letter to the unfeeling mistress of my affections which I beg you will deliver, I will this once give her a little more trouble, God knows whether I shall ever have it in my power to do it again — Inclination I am sure I shall have, unless I recover the exercise of my reason which has so long been unworthy her name, in that case I think I ought not to run myself a second time into temptation, having already found myself frail.

I beg dear sir that you will present my best respects to Mr and Mrs Clarke, to the young ladies and the two brothers, I assure you sir that I feel affection for them all, This I will desire Miss Lucy to do, but tis possible that she may be asshamed of her correspondent, in that case she will not be very communicative on the subject to the rest of the family.

The lands about Danville and in the neighbourhood of the Mr Caldwells appear to me to be superior in quality to the Lands on this side the Kentucky tho I have often heard that Fayette lands excelled all in the District. I am not in the least charmed with the Country this way when compared with some situations

<sup>3</sup>Mrs. Ann Biddle Wilkinson, the first wife of General James Wilkinson was a sister of Clement Biddle, a prominent merchant of Philadelphia. *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. XX, New York, 1936, p. 223. For Gen. Wilkinson, one of the most notable men in early Kentucky, *Ibid.*, pp. 222–226.

<sup>4</sup>The Wilderness Road, the chief route to early Kentucky, followed an Indian trail which crossed over the mountains from the Valley of Virginia to the New River, and thence through the "Wilderness" to Cumberland Gap and Crab Orchard. It was soon replaced by the shorter and less difficult route down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh or Wheeling. Thos. Speed, *The Wilderness Road*, *Filson Club Publications*, vol. II, Louisville, 1886; *History of the State of Ohio*, vol. I, B. W. Bond, Jr., *The Foundations of Ohio*, Columbus, 1941, pp. 30–31.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

on Beargrass, I prefer the neighbourhood of eight or ten miles round Louisville to any I have seen in the District. Perhaps my partiality for some of the inhabitants in your part of the world may contribute a little to this preference.

I beg sir that you will embrace the first opportunity of writing to me, and let me know every thing — tell me whether there is like to be a second wedding soon at the house of Mr C——, the first I consider as certain. I adjure you dear sir to let me have your guess, for sure I am that you will have it in your power to make a good one. If you see William is like to be crowned tell me, and I shall then know what part I am to take. for like the servant of Isaac I would fain know to turn to the right hand or the left.

God bless you my friend and give you many happy days in the arms of your Betsey, and while you riot in bliss if you can for a moment spare a thought on any other subject honor me with a line

Believe me sir when I assure you that I am exceedingly sensible of all the past obligations you have laid me under, and hope a continuance of your favours.

adieu dear sir, for it is now ten of the clock at night and my land lady begins to look as if she wished me gone to bed.

Dear sir yours

John C. Symmes

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES AND GEORGE TURNER<sup>5</sup>  
TO WINTHROP SARGENT

[O.H.S. Mss.]

Vincennes, July, 10th. 1790

Sir,

The subscribers, two of the judges of the Western Territory, beg leave to address Mr. Secretary Sargent upon a subject which,

<sup>5</sup>George Turner, a territorial judge, was well versed in the law, but was a man of irascible disposition. He frequently disagreed with the rather narrow minded secretary of the Northwest Territory, Winthrop Sargent, who acted as governor during Governor St. Clair's frequent absences. Bond, *Civilization of the Old Northwest*, pp. 80–83.

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

as it appears to be important to the public service, they conceive it their duty to lay before him, vested as he now is, in the governor's absence, with the powers of the chief magistrate.

The law which directs the sittings of the general court is, in our opinion, ill calculated to answer the ends intended. The court is ordered to be held "at four certain periods, or terms, in each and every year, in such counties as the judges shall, from time to time, deem most conducive to the general good, they giving timely notice of the place of their sitting, viz: upon the first monday of February, May, October, and December" And in case the judges should not attend at the time ordered, the sheriff may, by that law, adjourn the court for six days only; and if the judges do not appear within that period, then all business is to lie over till the next term.

Now we presume, Sir, that the regulations of that law, are extremely objectionable. February and December are months in which it is often impracticable to travel by water in this country, as the ice is known to float in dangerous quantities from December to February inclusive. The fixing a precise day for opening the court, and allowing but six days more before adjournment must follow, would also, unavoidably & frequently defeat the intention of holding courts in those terms: — for the vast distances which the judges have to travel through a country unsettled and overrun, at times, with hostile savages — — — without roads or regular communications by land, and whose waters are in some seasons unnavigable against their currents — are difficulties wch require an accommodation of times with seasons, in order to place it within the judges' power to discharge their duty with precision.

Another matter in which the law alluded to appears to be defective, is, the not classing together — the terms and counties relatively. For as we have no doubt it will be necessary to hold the general court annually in every county now or hereafter to be erected, it does not seem proper to leave it in the discretion of the judges. Besides, we think it would operate to the satisfaction & convenience of the citizens in every county to know, that by law in such a month in the year, the general court *must* open in such a county, and at such a place. Those who might have



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

business with the court, would thus be enabled to prepare, in due time, for the prosecution and defence of their suits.

A little previous attention to local circumstances would place the holding of courts on the most regular footing, and obviate the difficulties which threaten to arise from the loose rules prescribed by the law now in force.

Permit us, therefore, to submit to your consideration, the necessity of a new law, as well to empower us now to open the general court here, and afterwards at Kaskaskias, as to regulate its terms in future throughout the territory, in a way the most conducive to the public good — — — — — till such time, at least, till as a complete judiciary Act can be framed.

We would also propose, that in any law for this purpose, the terms and places be classed thus —— The general court shall open yearly in the county of St. Clair, sometime in April; in the county of Knox, sometime in June; in the county of Hamilton, sometime in August; in the county of Washington, sometime in October — — — — — but without attaching to any of them a precise day.

This arrangement would accommodate the judges on the circuit with high and rapid water in descending the Ohio; and as it is usual for the Mississippi to rise several weeks later in the spring than the Ohio, they would have it to ascend in low water (when only it is navigable upwards) and be favoured with the flood down it as they return. Again: the freshes of the Ohio being over by this time, there would be no extraordinary current to encounter in ascending it and the Wabash to hold the court in Knox. This certainly would tend to fix and facilitate the execution of the public business.

The death of two of the judges, and the great distance which another had to come, after the arrangement of his domestic concerns, rendered it impracticable for us to reach this country sooner than we did. Yet if, instead of June, we had arrived even in May, the general court could not have opened in the county of Knox *in May*, — it not being erected into a county till the succeeding month. As we are now here, and mean, if by law we shall be

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

enabled, to proceed to the Illinois, we feel it to be strongly our duty to urge the necessity of holding a court at this time in Vincennes, in order that government may be completely organized, and have its full operation — and in urging this matter, we flatter ourselves it will coincide with the views and wishes of the sovereign authority of the United States. We believe, further, that it woud. be forwarding the essential interests of the community ——— Courts of Quarter Sessions and Common pleas are now, it seems, in the full exercise of their respective powers and jurisdictions in the several counties of this Territory — and in some of them they have been long established. But until the general court can be held also, no superintending authority can exist to control them; and hence they may prove dangerous to the rights of the citizens, and the interests of the United States.

There is another consideration, Sir, which induces a wish on our part to see the general court called into existence. The inferior courts will thence derive a tone to their proceedings. At present they are very deficient, and desultory in practice; nor is there any uniformity observed among them, with respect to process, rules, or fees. These irregularities will grow familiar through custom; and the difficulty of correcting them hereafter will increase with the remoteness of the period.

Should you continue to think it inexpedient to assent to any alteration in the terms as they now stand, we would next submit it to your consideration, whether it is not advisable to pass immediately a law, vesting the majority of the judges with discretionary powers for holding courts of oyer and terminer and general gaol delivery in the several counties, whenever the state of criminals may require it. Such a court seems highly requisite, at this juncture, in the county of Knox, where a prisoner is now in confinement, charged with the high crime of murder.

We beg you to inform us if a clerk has been appointed to the general court; and whether there is an attorney general commissioned to prosecute the pleas of the United States.

As we have not yet been furnished with any official copies either of the laws of the territory, or proclamations of the governor, we venture to hope that proper and timely steps will be



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

taken to provide the judges of the territory with authenticated copies of the laws and proclamations now, or hereafter to be published.

We have the honour to be, with respectful consideration,  
Sir,

Your obedient and Most humble Servants  
John Cleves Symmes.  
G Turner

The honourable Winthrop Sargent, esquire, Secretary of the Territory of the United States N.W. of the River. Ohio — & now vested with the powers of governour.

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO DR. BOUDINOT<sup>6</sup>

[H.P.S.O. *Mss.*]

Northbend January the 12th 1792

My dear Sir-

Before this time you must have been made acquainted with the dreadful misfortunes attending the last summers operations. I expect that reasons have been assigned to government for the total overthrow of our army — It is natural for doctors to assign causes for the death of their patients, but the causes assigned are not always the real ones.<sup>7</sup>

In the letter which I had the honor of addressing to you or Capt Dayton by Judge Turner, I gave you some hints of what I plainly foresaw the military arrangements then on foot would end in. I will acknowledge I had no Idea that our army would have been destroyed in the course of three hours, for it was im-

<sup>6</sup>Although this letter has already been published (*H.P.S.O. Quarterly*, vol. V, no. 3, Cincinnati, 1910, pp. 93-101), it has been reprinted because of its intrinsic value as probably the best account of St. Clair's ill-fated campaign, and also as an outstanding example of Judge Symmes' power of clear analysis. Cf. *Memoirs of Benjamin Van Cleve*, *H.P.S.O. Quarterly*, vol. XVII, Cincinnati, 1922, nos. 1 & 2, pp. 22-29, especially p. 25 (note 30).

<sup>7</sup>While Judge Symmes does not mention St. Clair by name, the many subtle criticisms of the campaign and its commander in chief are unmistakable. For Governor St. Clair, see Bond, *Civilization of the Old Northwest*, chaps. III and IV, *passim*.

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

possible for any one to suppose that the army was at any time to be crowded together on a few acres of ground and liable to be surrounded by half their number of Indians, whose every shot could not fail of killing or wounding three or four of our men: while our platoons in returning their fire, three times in four, saw not an Indian they being hid behind trees, but still our men fired on mechanically at they knew not what.

From the first week in June onward till I went to Galipolis in October, I discovered evident symptoms of very great disappointments and miscarriage in the course of the campaign. I knew with certainty that there must be a great failure in the supplies for the army as they advanced to the Northward, if the early part of the season was lost, when the flour then at fort Washington might have been transported up the Miami to new Chilocothe (Tawixtwi) with very little risk or difficulty, the river then being high. There were three or four companies then at Headquarters which might have been employed to much better purpose in building a fort and cabbins at New Chilocothe than to be kept shut up in the town of Cincinnata for several months where they were debauching themselves and the Citizens by their mischievous intercourse with each other. here all the flour ought to have been stored early in the season, which was necessary for the consumption of the troops in their further progress. From New Chilocothe detachments of horse should have been frequently sent sometimes towards Sandusky and sometimes towards the Maume villages, these should have blazed the trees on every of their routs as tho they were marking the way for a much larger army to follow in a short time, this would have kept the Indians in continual alarms, from sandusky bay to eel river that they would never have known at what point to have collected their force, as the inhabitants of each village would not have forsaken the defence of their own horde, and the grand movement might have been made in September after all the troops had arrived without any considerable opposition.

New Chilocothe or some better ground near it is more proper on every account, than the place where fort Jefferson is built, to be made our barrier to the Indians until we can possess our-



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

selves of their country, and fort Jefferson ought to be evacuated and the garrison placed here. Here are extensive natural meadows extremely fine either for hay or pasture so necessary for our horse on which we ought principally to depend for our offensive operations in future.

Besides, if this place was occupied by a garrison the country round which being extremely inviting would immediately be cultivated by settlers, as it is within the purchase and the rage of the people of Kentucky has always been to possess themselves of this part of the grant on account of the fine prairies, waters, timber and so level a country. could this be effected any quantity of corn and hay might be made in the course of one year where so much good soil is already cleared to their lands.

Whenever the miami is boatable provisions and military stores may be thrown up to new Chilcothe with great expedition in bateaux or flat-bottomed boats, properly constructed, the large keel-boats of the Ohio are very improper, they draw too much water.

The delays attending the movements of our army were ruinous to the last degree. From June to September the army seemed motionless. It is true, all the troops expected had not arrived, but the greatest sufficiency had arrived in this period to have built a chain of small forts along the east bank of the Miami from Colerain to New-Chilcothe — This work might have been done while the troops which had already arrived were idle, and would have wholly saved the months of September and October, which were lost in building fort Hamilton and fort Jefferson. Another advantage would have accrued: By lining the east bank of the great miami with a chain of small forts in the former part of the season, and making a long stay at New chilcothe from June to September, the Indians would have been deceived in our main object. They would have considered our plan of operations rather as defensive than offensive, they would have construed all our precautions into nothing more than a view of securing the purchase and protecting the settlements that were made therein against their future attacks since they had attempted the reduction of Colerain the preceeding winter. But the moment that the

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

troops crossed the Miami at fort Hamilton, every old squaw must have known that the views of the main army were offensive and against what towns their designs were; formidable measures were therefore taken against them accordingly.

After our designs were thus incontestably announced by crossing the Miami, tedious and slow were our movements occasioned by the difficulty of bringing up provisions, and the building of fort Jefferson in their rout, which after all was left unfinished. and yet with all this loss of time the army was not so far advanced as new Chilocothe, where they might have been by the first of September and all the forts built, had proper measures been adopted in june for the subsequent operations.

The mountain always seemed to be in labour, great things was to be done — but how they were to be accomplished was altogether incomprehensible from appearances. The army seemed unwieldy — was not well furnished with horses and teams, since arrangements were made to take all the stores and supplies every inch of the way by land, and nothing of the business anticipated by previous measures.

Too great a proportion of the privates appeared to be totally debilitated and rendered incapable of this service, either from their youth (mere boys) or by their excessive intemperance and abandoned habits. These men who are to be purchased from the prisons wheelbarrows and brothels of the nation at two dollars per month, will never answer our purposes for fighting of Indians. Such men may do very well in armies or garrisons where their duty is merely mechanical, but it requires another sort of men to contend against Indians with success. It is to be considered that every Indian is in fact a general in his way, and must be opposed by a combatant equally skilled in all their cunning and artifice. Sure I am that one hundred Marlboroughs could not fight fifty Indians in the woods with success. What then had we to expect from the dint of so unequal a conflict, when three fourths of our troops were altogether unworthy such service: unless their great inferiority could be more than compensated by the superior and brilliant talents of their general, as well with regard to his alertness and activity in his motions, as with respect to his wise and judi-



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

cious plan of decisive operations in which his abilities were more than a match for Indian subtilty.

The misfortunes of the late direful day may also be attributed in a great measure to the radical error committed in june with regard to the omission of throwing flour up the great Miami as high as new Chilocothe. This being neglected it was not possible to furnish the necessary supplies by land on the rout the army took: the consequence was, the troops were delayed in their march — reduced in their rations to one half and even to one quarter of their flour. This brought on murmerings, and discontent — rendered them weak and irresolute and induced whole companies of militia to desert. The first regiment of regular troops was sent back forty or fifty miles (with what propriety I will not say) either to bring again to camp the deserting militia, or to prevent their taking supplies of flour from a convoy of provisions then expected to be on their way for the army: both of which views must of course prove nugatory from the first moment they were formed as the Militia left camp early in the morning and the first regiment did not march after them until the afternoon of the same day and could never overtake them nor prevent their plundering the convoy. So that not only many of the Militia had absented themselves previous to the day of action, but the first regiment which was in fact the best part and flower of the army all things considered, was also absent.

The Indians no doubt took advantage of this defection in our numbers as they certainly were apprized of the return of so considerable a part of the army. This circumstance added to the unaccountable disposition of our army so favourable to the views of the enemy, could not fail of inviting them to the attack in which they saw success certain.

It is also to be feared that the impiety of our troops may not be considered as the most remote cause of our misfortune. If it be true as our religion teaches that the great governor of the Universe is in fact the God of armies, and really inspects into the conduct of men, and is himself a being of immaculate holiness and one who is displeased with the abominations of Man, and I own myself so much of a fanatic as to believe that he is, how can we

expect his smiles on our arms, when the most horrid blasphemies, drunkenness and lewdness marks the character of too many of our troops[;] there are indeed very few exceptions. I wish those vices were only to be found among the private men, but there are too many officers whom one would suppose from their station, possessed some Ideas of decency in their language, good manners and morality, but who in fact are the prophanest wretches that I ever heard speak with a tongue. My blood sometimes chills within me to hear their blasphemous familiarity with the names and attributes of the three persons of the Godhead. Sure I am that their unbounded impieties are not known to government, or some attempts would certainly be made at a reform of the army in a moral sense. and it might be easily effected if the commanding officers did not too often set the example, but on the contrary would do all in their power to check it. If it was once known in the army that the general neither swore nor drank intemperately, and would never fail to frown on those who did, and would even make it so personal as not to invite to his table any who indulged in those vices, those monsters in wickedness who now strut triumphant with brazen front and polluted breath, would soon become ashamed sink into contempt, and either forsake the practice or the army.

It pains me extremely sir, to reflect on the consequences of our fatal repulse. What the success of the Indians may not tempt them to undertake against these settlements in the course of the winter and coming spring is very uncertain: I greatly fear the event however. But one thing is certain beyond all doubt, this is, that the Indians will find in themselves no disposition to treat at all with us of peace. A continuance of the war in their opinion will be a continuance of their emoluments. Great indeed was their plunder on the last defeat. I am told by some officers that not less than twenty thousand dollars in specie and bank notes was supposed to be lost; what then must have been the whole amount of the value of their plunder? Their great acquisition of plunder was however attended with one happy effect to us: it saved the flying remains of the army — but for the plunder, hardly a soul would have escaped the slaughter to bring us the dreadful news. The enemy individually Jealous that another would take more



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

plunder than themselves very soon gave over the chace, which was indeed indertaken but by few.

I sometimes fear that the Indians are not more reluctant to peace, than the United States will be to a continuance of an active war with them. Such sums of money have been thrown away for two succeeding campaigns and nothing effected, but on every account we are worse of than when we began. I tremble lest Congress should determine that the defence of the western country costs the nation more than it is all worth to them, and leave us to our own defence in the best manner we can make it. Not that I despair but that the Indians may be effectually subdued in the course of one years operations: but if I may be allowed to give my opinion with regard to the most efficient measures to be taken against them, I would not advise a plan of operations for the present year on so large a scale as that of the last campaign. I would not bring a soldier into service from any part of the United States east of the Alleghany Mountains, except so many recruits as would keep full the two regiments already established. And these Regiments I could wish might be kept on garrison service only, and that of building several new forts which are yet absolutely necessary. The militia situate to the westward of the Alleghany Mountains are unquestionably the most proper persons in the nation to contend with Indians.

You never may expect to get Indians to fight you on your own terms. If your army is composed of infantry they will only fight when they have greatly the advantage and are almost certain of victory. Cavalry therefore alone can compel them to engage on terms which you will approve. Our plan of active operations must therefore be carried on with horse. Of the approach of these the enemy cannot have long notice, nor elude an action when our commanders shall think proper to bring one on.

With horse we shall always be able to move with greater celerity than the enemy, both in advancing and retreating. Far smaller numbers will also answer our purposes if the war be predatory for one season and carried on with horse. The western country abounds with men and horses adequate to this business, could they be drawn forth into the service for short periods of

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

time, and a liberal encouragement will always do it in sufficient numbers. I never wish to see more than six hundred woods-men well mounted and accoutred marching at any one time against the enemy the ensuing summer, as every thing is not to be put in issue on one of these excursions. The rendezvous of these ought to be at New Chilocothe as that place is nearly equi-distant to all the important Indian towns on the Wabash and Maume rivers, for this purpose a fort should be built at this place early in the season. Pittsburgh is a proper place for rendezvous when the Sandusky villages are the object. These men should be armed with a rifle-gun, two horse pistols fixed to a girdle buckled round the waist of the men, and not fixed as Usual to the saddle, they must have a tomehawk of one and half pound weight, with a helve of two feet in length. The cartridges for their pistols ought to be leaded with buck-shot of about one hundred to the pound. these are for close work either on horse-back or when dismounted. their rifles are for long and certain shots. their hatchets are for charging in lieu of swords, but are much better for the Use of woodsmen and raw militia. David preferred a sling because he had always been Used to a sling. hatchets are far more wieldy both in carriage and in action, and will cost about one eighth as much as swords would do. they are not liable to break. they are far more Useful for many other purposes on such an excursion as rafting rivers, encamping, procuring firewood, cutting down the enemies corn &c &c. These men will average at the pay of one dollar per day man and horse including rations and forrage which they must furnish themselves with, or pay for them at a moderate price. A due proportion between officers and privates must be observed in their pay but this must bear no proportion to the difference observed in the established Regiments, for I wish to draw forth the more respectable part of the community, such as value themselves upon having a country, property, connections and a reputation to fight for, and not such as enter service merely because they can live no longer unhung any other way. The horses of which these squadrons are composed are to be valued at a reasonable price and paid for by the public if lost in action or by other unavoidable misfortunes. The pistols and hatchets



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

with their trapings are to be furnished by the public and returned to the public magazines when the tour is over. the hatchets should be four inches broad on the edge, plated thin in all parts so as to be as large as  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb of Iron & steel will make them, yet not too thin so as to be in danger of breaking when Used in wood. each man furnishes himself with a rifle gun. The public furnishes powder, lead and flints; care must be taken that the powder be of the first quality. You can hardly conceive sir how much depends on this circumstance. These squadrons as they are to be composed altogether of citizens, must be commanded by citizens, but by such as government shall appoint, to take the militia officers as they rise will never do. The officer who commands these detachments must be one of whose abilities, experience, courage, temperance and activity government has the strongest assurance — we pay too dear for hoping and wishing the reformation of mortals, but still confiding, and I never wish to see a man more than forty years of age at the head of these partizans. there is a vigour in young men which we may never expect to meet with in more advanced years; and every thing must depend on the alertness with which these excursions are made; the months of June July August and September are the only months in the year for this service; horse cannot well live in the woods much earlier or later, but I had much rather add may than October; after the first frost falls the food in the woods is gone and horses must starve in a wilderness. But whither am I hurrying myself on a subject in which you will say I have no business. I acknowledge your rebuke is just. My duty is not militare. I ought to be silent and patiently wait the issue of the war, relying on the superior wisdom of those whose province it is to direct the storms of war. But feeling myself interested as I do in the success of our arms and puting an end to hostilities in this country, no man in the nation being more so, I hope sir that you will pardon me the liberty I have taken of troubleing you with what I shall not be displeased if you call the reveries of an ignorant man.

January the 15th 92. I had all the fall sir, intended to have been with you by Christmass or New years, but on my return from Gallipolis the latter end of November where I had been to hold

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

a court, I found the Miami settlements in the greatest disorder arising from their dismay on the late defeat. Many families had fled into Kentucky before I arrived. I had the address to dissuade many others from following them. we have lost from the purchase on this occasion about twenty families in all, tho but one family from Northbend is gone. many more were a tip-toe to be going, and it has been with difficulty that I have retained them. I hope their fears are pretty well over for the present and they are in some measure reconciled to stay; but should the Indians this winter or spring make a breach upon any one of the villages in the purchase, I fear that all the inhabitants of the other villages will fly for safety into Kentucky and leave the purchase once more a desert. I can illy be spared to go abroad. all the encouragements that I can impart to the people are necessary to keep up their drooping spirits in such discouraging times as these are. I was however preparing myself for my Journey to Philadelphia, when on the 21st of last month I was run upon by a mad steer and much gored by his horns, indeed it is a wonder that he had not killed me on the spot. I have not been able to forsake my bed longer than while it is made again for me, and now write leaning on my left side with a folio lying on the bed before me and my paper and ink on the book. I am however mending fast, my fever has left me, and my strength is returning with my appetite and my wound which is between my legs heals tollerably well. As I cannot ride on horse back for several weeks yet to come I send my nephew with my dispatches which I hope will arrive safe.

I have the honor to be with respect sir, Your most obedient very humble servant

Honble Doct Boudinot. John Cleves Symmes

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO GOVERNOR JAY

[*N. J. Hist. Soc. Mss.*]

Miami, Northbend, 19th. April 1796

Sir

I have to acknowledge the honor of a letter from your excellency some months ago, by Mr. Chapman. It would have given me peculiar pleasure to have rendered Mr. Chapman settlement



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

in our country satisfactory to him; but he seemed to take exception to our form of government, and gave preference to that of Kentucky and went thither; how he succeeded there I have not learned.

Captain John Brown a respectable neighbor of ours will wait on your excellency with these, from whom you may learn, any particulars of our country, he having lived several years in it.

I beg Sir, you'll present my most respectful regards to Mrs. Jay and family. Mrs. Symmes also writes by Capt. Brown who will do himself the honor of bearing the commands of your family to this country.

I have the honor to be, respectfully, Your excellency's most obedient humble servant

John Cleves Symmes

His Excellency Governor Jay New York.

### JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO CAPT. JOHN MATSON

[*Short Family Papers*]

Capt John Matson,

sir,

Please to purchase for me, in the Redstone country the following articles for the purpose of erecting Ghrist-mills to run with one water-wheel and two pair of mill-stones . . viz —

#2. mill spindles to be drawn four feet two inches long from the under side of the Rines to the foot of the spindle and one & a half inch thick and four inches broad ———

—————  
#2. Rines to be drawn for four forks, and four inches thick through the eye.

—————  
#2. Gudgeons three inches square & two feet 4 inches long.

—————  
#4. Gudgeons twenty inches long, and two inches square

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

#4. Bars of Iron, ten feet long and two inches & three quarters broad and scant one quarter of an inch thick.

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#4. Bars two and a half inches broad & scant one quarter of an inch thick, and six feet long.

---

#2. Bars two inches broad, six feet long, and three quarters of an inch thick.

---

#2. Bars five feet & a half long two inches wide and three quarters of an inch thick.

---

#4. Bars two inches broad, and half an inch thick, and five feet long.

---

#4. Bars four & a half feet long, two inches broad and half an inch thick.

---

100 pounds of bars one inch square for bolts.

---

and two pair of mill-stones three feet ten inches over across the stone, and the runners fifteen inches deep through the eye. Your procuring the above articles on the best terms you can, and bringing them down will much oblige Your friend, and humble servant

John Cleves Symmes.

Northbend July 29th 1796

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO THOMAS JEFFERSON

[*by permission of Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif. H.M. 5962*]

Northbend, Miami, 4th March 1801.

To Thomas Jefferson Esquire. President of the philosophical society of arts and sciences at Philadelphia.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

Sir,

Samuel Heighway esquire, and Mr John Poole, both of the Miami purchase, have lately invented a machine on the principle of steam, that I am inclined to believe will excel any thing of the kind that the world has yet been favored with. From several years acquaintance with Mr Heighway, and prepossession in favor of his integrity and judgment. I am inclined to hope that the gentlemen are not mistaken in their calculations, nor too sanguine in their expectations from the powers of their projected mechanism.

Great indeed, will be the Usefulness of such a performance to every part of the United States, and to none more, than to the Inhabitants of this country whose prosperity depends on Inland navigation, and Manufactures of various kinds, which will be greatly promoted by their machine.

Permit me sir, to commend these gentlemen (one or both of whom will have the honor to wait on you with this address) to your patronage and countenance. — Their wish is to avail themselves of the advantages of the best artizans in Philadelphia, and proper materials for compassing the work, and to obtain, if found worthy, a patent from Congress, that they may in a moderate degree secure to themselves some pecuniary emoluments from their long studied and expensive invention, which the same must necessarily prove to them, by the time the work is perfected.

I have the honor to be, sir, with the highest consideration and respect, Your most obedient humble servant.

John Cleves Symmes.

### RECEIPT FROM JOHN SHACKLEFORD, JR.

[*Short Family Papers*]

Today the 5th [February] 1805 ———

Rept for Changing purified whisky peach Brandy and apple Brandy into ardent Spirits of a different name and quallity — —

to every 8 Gallons of purified whisky add one Gallon of french brandy or one Gallon of Rum or Gin and it will be Completely

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

French Brandy Rum or Gin of the Same quallity of that you mix it with —— next to make Cordials of purified whisky to one Gallon of purified whisky add one quart of warter then add 25 Drops of the Oil of Cloves and 6 or 7 Drops of the oil of Annis Seed mix them in Syrup sufficient to Sweten it and it will be Eligant Cordials —— —— ——

To make Syrup Dissolve your Sugar in purified whisky until it becomes a Candy and then Strain it through 5 or 6 thicknsses of knew flannel until it becomes quite Clear it will then be fit fer You

To make Chery Bounce take the barke of the Root of the wild Chery tree and boil it in warter until it Becomes very Strong then add to one Gallon of purified whisky nearly one quart of Clear warter mixed with Syrup sufficient to Sweten it then add the Chery liquid in such propotion as to make it taste like Chery Bounce it will be necessary to have it well Cullered with Burnt Sugar and Red Sander which ought to be purified ——

To make Souer punch take 10 or 12 Drops of the oil of vitrol 6 Drs of the Essance of Lemmons 3 Gil of water  $\frac{3}{4}$ th of a Gil of Rum or pd whisky and plenty of loaf Sugar mix them Well together and you will have Eligant Souer punch —— To Make madary wine of purified whisky for Every Gallon of purified whisky of first proof ad 3 quarts of warter to that add 7 quarts of wine and the whole will become wine of the Same quallity of that you mix it with —— —— ——

Another method of makeing Gin which is Certainly the best to Every barrel of Purified whiskey add about 20 Drops of the oil of Juniper this after being mixed you will throw up in a Still & Run it over again it will be Excelent Ginn —— —— —— —— ——

Given by us to Capt. Benjamin Bervy this 5 Day of Febuery 1805 –

John Shackleford jur

*Ap.[ril] 1805*

[*Short Family Papers*]

Recpt for Changing purified whisky into Different name and quality – – – —— ——

First take a barrel that will hold 100 gal wash it Clean until



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

it have no Lent then make a false head and put about half way of the barrel fit it well then take it up and bore it full of holes about one or two inches apart then Get about two and a half yards of new flannel take it and Double it about two or three thicknesses and put it over the false head Sew or peg it on the lose Side of the head and then put your head Down and Chinch it Close and put your Charecole upon it and your whisky upon the Cole and when it Comes through the Cole and flannel it will be Clear — make a hole jest Above the low Chine put a Cock in it — Reaty for Drawing you must bore a air hole jest below the false bottom Alwais mind to open this airhole before you Draw it out of the Cock — ——

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO ETHAN ALLEN BROWN<sup>8</sup>

[*From the Ms. collection of Sam. D. Rich, Esq.*]

Chillicothe the 11th of January 1808

Dear sir —

I have been once before the Committee of five on the business of the College Township<sup>9</sup> — Mr Burnet was present and spoke above an hour, but not one point that he took was tenable — or at least I think so — I did not want half the time to shew his ground fallacious. tomorrow evening the committee sits again. I expect that Jacob will leave no stone unturned to prevent an act of incorporation being passed, but if members are not warped from their duty, and will give themselves the trouble of reading documents, I think they will not reject the petitions of the people. Nothing can be more unjust.

<sup>8</sup>Ethan Allen Brown, a native of Connecticut, settled in Cincinnati in 1804 and became a successful lawyer. In 1810 he was elected a judge of the Supreme Court of Ohio. Later he became register of the land office in Cincinnati, and was elected Governor of Ohio in 1818. At first a Federalist, he became a Republican, and was in the thick of the local political struggles. W. F. Utter, *History of the State of Ohio*, vol. II, *The Frontier State*, 1803–1825, Columbus, 1842, pp. 44–55; *Four Volume Reference Library, Ohio's Three Hundred*, vol. IV, Chicago, 1937, pp. 51–52.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. *Symmes Correspondence*, Bond, ed., pp. 184–186 (notes 253, 254, 255).

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

There is great intrigues going on here for a successor on the bench of Judge Symmes.<sup>10</sup> The federalists to a man I expect will support Mr Stone — he says as much himself and is much elated with his prospect. Republicans are divided between Mr Ethan Allen Brown, and Mr Richard S. Thomas, they however propose holding a caucus for the purpose of settling the question which of the two latter shall be the man.

If Judge D S. would write to some of his old acquaintances who are in the Legislature (for I think they are numerous) perhaps it might go far in favor of Mr Brown — both feds and republicans agree that the New Judge ought to be appointed somewhere between the two Miami's. but who he shall be is the question. I begin to fear that Judge McFarling will be neglected, — People in Hamilton County will do well to Name some character to their members, who will be agreeable to them to succeed Mr McFarling in case he should not be confirmed in his seat on the bench. Col. Jones I understand is fishing for it assiduously. Doctor Wood, or John Matson in my opinion will either of them do. and perhaps you may think of some others.

Judge Dunlavys<sup>11</sup> distiny is not yet known — but I was informed this evening that the probability is that the Committee will report in his favor, or that the complaints are not of such a nature as to merit an impeachment against him.

By a letter which Govr Kirker has received from John Smith we infer that Smith is like to keep his seat, for he has written to Mr Kirker, to forward to him the Chillicothe papers, Which we conclude he would not have done if he expected to leave the City of Washington in a short time.

We are at great loss here to know which of the two nations we shall have to fight, French or English — The embargo that Congress have laid seems to be a war measure, but still we meet with nothing in the papers that tells us which Congress considers the

<sup>10</sup>Daniel Symmes, who had been appointed to the Supreme Court of Ohio in 1804. McBride, *Pioneer Biography*, vol. II, p. 229.

<sup>11</sup>Francis Dunlavy (Dunlevy), a native of North Carolina, settled at Columbia where he was associated with John Reily in the first school in the Cincinnati area. Later he became a leading citizen of Cincinnati. Greve, *Centennial History of Cincinnati*, vol. I, p. 180.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

hostile nation. France can hurt us least — but still I had rather fight Britain. We can gain the Canadas of the English — we can catch their merchant ships — It will teach the rising generation to abhor them — This will be a great point gained, for if we ever lose our liberties, our fetters will be of english manufacture.

The time of the Legislature is much Engrossed with the division of Counties — three or four I believe will be made this session. There is much said about appointing a fourth Judge and laying the state into two Districts or Circuits, but the measure is not yet decided on —

The federal Court seems to have run aground — No Burr nor Blannerhasset appears — A Mr Bibb from Kentucky has come over to assist Mr Creighton in the prosecution of the pleas — but they have nothing to do —

I have a bad cold at present, am almost sick — my head and bones ach, but I have been writing the whole day notwithstanding.

present my kind regards to Mr Symmes and family — to Mr Moore and family, and all friends. I shall be glad to get home. for I am heartily tired of the Legislature before I get into it. there seems to be more of discord than concord — more endeavoring to supplant than to establish — In short swindling may be found in some places besides gaming houses.

I wrote to Mr Symmes by Mesrs Henderson and Minnisier, I hope the letter has come to hand. with much respect, I remain  
sir,

Your very humble servant

Ethan A Brown Esqr.

John Cleves Symmes

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO ETHAN ALLEN BROWN

Jan. 11, 1808 (cont.) January the 13th 1808

Dr Sir —

I had not sealed these when the mail came in this evening and Mr Tiffin the post master handed me a letter from Mr Symmes and another from Mr Moore — It seems you did not get the news of Mr Symme's appointment until the 8th which was five days later than I had it on the 3rd by a letter from Govr — Tiffin to his brother who brought the letter directly to me. This day the

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

committee reported favorably of Judge Dunlavy, and the house approved of it. A bill is on foot to compel the owners of mill-dams on the larger rivers, to build locks for boats and slopes for rafts. Chillicothe & Marietta have applied for charters for banks.

Give my best regards to Mr Symmes and Mr Moore. I will write them next opportunity — Mr Moore writes that every nerve must be exerted in favor of Mr E.A.B. to succeed Mr D.S. on the bench — This industry is stirring — all the objections with republicans to Mr E.A.B. that I have met with is “we are unacquainted with Mr Brown” — and yet they say they do not very well like Thomas — but they had rather have Thomas than Stone, whom they fear will come in if they do not run Thomas against him, taking it for granted that Thomas is a republican. Burnet is also doing his best for Stone — Mr Price & Mr Foster thinks there are more federals in the Legislature than there are republicans — and from several Symptoms it would seem that there are. Worthington & Beecher, leading members are both so.

I have mentioned in this letter that I had a bad cold & was very unwell — today I am much better, my pains have left me and my cold is wearing off.

Oblige me with a line sir if you please, and let me know what is doing in Cincinnati.

Dear Sir adieu.

Jno C. Symmes

[Addressed:] Ethan Allen Brown Esquire    Cincinnati

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO JAMES FINDLAY<sup>12</sup>

[H.P.S.O. Mss.]

Northbend, July the 11th 1808.

Sir — Capt. Aquila Wheeler is now with me on the subject of a letter addressed to you, published in Liberty-Hall under the

<sup>12</sup>James Findlay came to Cincinnati from Pennsylvania. In 1801 he was appointed receiver of public money in the land office, and in that capacity he accused Charles Vattier of stealing large sums. Vattier's trial and conviction aroused much public interest. As part of the sentence he was ordered to pay a large sum to Findlay. But the latter, who is said to have been “the soul of kindness and geniality”, interceded, and agreed that after Vattier had turned over all of his visible estate, he should be allowed to escape from the state. *The Trial of Charles Vattier*, Cincinnati, 1807, especially pp. XXV-XLI and 149-150; for James Findlay see *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. VI, New York, 1931, pp. 384, 385.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

signature of Justice.<sup>13</sup> Until Capt. Wheeler informed me, I did not know that such a piece had publicly appeared. Capt. Wheeler, however, supposes it was written by me. If I have been in any wise contributing to its fabrication, no motive but pure humanity towards a wretched man has impelled me to the measure. Could I see Vattier at liberty to return to his family, nothing further would ever appear on that subject under the signature of Justice. Nor can I conceive wherein Charles Vattier's enlargement would or could militate to your disadvantage — Whether the transfer of his property to you through the agency of Mr Longworth be legally done or not, is in no way determined, nor the question affected by Vattiers confinement; It is by a judicial decision at bar where your cause must be established, and where you will stand on as fair ground to maintain the transaction valid in a Court of justice, Vattier being at liberty, as though he be continued in prison.

With respect to the suit which you have instituted against Charles Vattier for ninety four thousand dollars subsequent to the judgment against him, his enlargement can have no bearing upon it to your disadvantage. It has been frequently practised that plaintiff's on suing out a *capias*, have directed the sheriff to suffer the defendant to be left at large at the risk of the plaintiff, and yet this lenity shown on the part of the plaintiff has in no instance operated as error in the return of the writ, or as a dereliction of the plaintiffs cause.

The third and only remaining objection that can possibly be raised against Vattiers enlargement from prison, is his fine of two hundred dollars accruing to the state, together with the cost's of the prosecution. If I could believe that the prisoner had money of his own to discharge these demands which cannot be waved by any power short of legislative; I should be sorry sir, to see you discharge them — but as it is a secret only known to himself whether he has, or has not money; it amounts to imprisonment for life to detain him in prison under the presumption that he has money, when he has none. hence it is evident that either

<sup>13</sup>This open letter was an exceptionally able summary of Vattier's case. *Liberty Hall*, July 2, 1808.

his friends must discharge these inevitable demands against him, or you must do it yourself. I persuade myself that you possess the candor to admit, that all his wife's relation United (and he has no other) are not able, if willing, to advance the fourth part thereof. It remains therefore, that if the fine and costs are discharged at all, they must be discharged by you, and this to me appears most reasonable — You are certainly in possession of funds that now are, or formerly were the unquestionable right of Vattier; and it is a well known principle of law, that formerly the king's; now the state's debts must first be paid, let who may lose their dues. I shall therefore, sir, be happy to learn that you, in your goodness, have settled both these demands against Vattier. Nor will you hazard the loss of this money, as it will forever remain a good charge against Vattier, apart from all your other claims — for it is not in the power of any one, or of all, (the legislature excepted) to oust the state of its dues where there is sufficient property; and it will only be loaning Vattier the amount.

Sir, the auther of Justice has no disposition to injure you either in fame or fortune — but he has an ardent wish to see Vattier enlarged — not on the score of his innocence, as that is certainly doubtful at best, but on the ground of humanity, and for the honor of the state. The forlorn man has been imprison many, many months without a gleam or prospect of relief; and to no possible good purpose (imprisonment being no part of his sentence,) this cruel imprisonment of a fellow citizen, in my opinion, reflects dishonor on the country in which it is suffered. Reflect sir, for a moment, how magnanimous it will appear in the eyes of the world, for you to throw open the prison-door to him, and let him go his way if he chuses to do so.

Has he injured you? — the more glorious for you will be the God-like act. It is not contended that his claim to mercy solely rests on his innocence — whether he be guilty or innocent he has been imprisoned long enough — shall we consecrate another Bastile in this land of freedom? God forbid. With you sir, it remains to wrest the pen out of the hand of justice, or point it to your honor. The writer of that production has no personal prejudices against you — but he does believe that it is a duty he owes



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

to his creator and to his fellow mortals, to contribute all in his power, without injury to himself, his neighbor, or the cause of truth, to relieve human distress.—Set Vattier at liberty, and I am much mistaken on the subject, if you ever have cause to regret the deed.

I have the honor to remain, with every sentiment of regard,  
sir, Your very humble servant.

John Cleves Symmes.

P. S. I intend to be at Cincinnati next sunday, and shall be happy in an interview with general Findley, on that or any other day. Perhaps it may be well that no answer to Justice should appear in public (if such be in contemplation) until after the proposed interview with general Findley, as it is possible that new light may be thrown on the subject. J.C.S.

### ADVERTISEMENT<sup>14</sup>

[*Short Family Papers*]

All persons in and near Northbend — at the Point — at the goose pond, and else where within the miami Township, who last year rented land of the subscriber, John Cleves Symmes, are hereby respectively notified, that each and every one who proposes to themselves to rent or improve any of the lands of the subscriber, for the ensuing season, are requested, To call at the house of the subscriber, on or before the first day of february next, and take a lease for the land they mean or wish to occupy the present year or comming season, otherwise the subscriber must consider a delay of taking a lease by that time, as a refusal to rent anyland for corn or other purposes the present year, and shall proceed to let out the same to other tenants. And it is but just to inform such persons who do not chuse to enter into a lease with the subscriber, that they will be wise to prepare to leave the place they now live on, by the first day of April next, or sooner if possible, as none can expect to be suffered to remain longer on the land, who do not

<sup>14</sup>Probably this advertisement was in the customary form of a handbill that was posted at conspicuous places. Apparently it was not published in the local newspapers. *Liberty Hall*, January 12 – February 2, 1809.

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

take a lease, and become bound under hand and seal for the faithful performance of the conditions on which they may lease, or rent a farm or smaller piece of land.

And the subscriber hereby gives full and lawful warning to all such tenants, who do not enter into leases as is above stated, that if they do not leave the house or the cabin in which they live at present, and the land they occupied the last year, by the first day of April next, the land will be rented to others, and compulsory measures according to law, will be taken to put them out of their present dwellings. Those who wish to know the terms of a lease, must without delay call on the subscriber at his house.

Northbend

John Cleves Symmes

January the 12th 1809.

### JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO DANIEL SYMMES

[*Short Family Papers*]

Northbend, January the 31st 1809.

My dear Nephew,

I am owing Mr Stephen Armstrong Eleven dollars on a yoke of oxen that I bought last fall, and he is in the greatest distress for want of the money, as all his effects are under execution and will be sold in a short time if he cannot get eleven dollars by which he can save his property —

Now as I have not the money, I must beg your assistance, and will thank you to let him have that sum, pray sir do not fail to help him if there be so much money in Cincinnati — and charge the eleven dollars to me. please send by Mr Armstrong all the late News papers, for winter bound here I learn nothing of news,  
and oblige Yours affectionately

John Cleves Symmes

Danl Symmes. Esqr

My respects to Your worthy family.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO SUNDRY PERSONS, 1809–1811

[*Short Family Papers*]

Mr Demoss, let the bearers of this note have as much corn out of my cribb as they chuse to take — and oblige your friend

28th march 1810

John Cleves Symmes

P s p

Bouyer & Conolly got 40 barrels, 2–4–1 to the barrel

To Mr David E Wade of Cincinnati, sir, be pleased to let the bearer, William Freeman have one pair of fine lined shoes of two and half dollar price like those John C Short had from you, and charge the same to Your humble servant.

3rd july 1810

John Cleves Symmes

This is settled

this is settled

Mr D. Symmes. I beg you to lend me one dollar, for I have not one cent — & wish Peter to bring me some peaches from the River where there are some to sell. let peter have the dollar & oblige

[1809–1811?]

Sir Yours

J. C. Symmes

To Mr Erwin and Co. Sir, please to let George Larrison have a bake oven, & Ezekiel Mulford have a small bake oven and a wool hat & charge your friend.

10th April 1811.

John Cleves Symmes

Received of John Cleves Syms Seaventy five Doollars by the hand of David Griffie by me the 9 of May 1809

Robert Maxwell

J[OHN] C[LEVES] S[YMMES] TO ARTHUR ORR

[*Short Family Papers*]

To Mr Arthur Orr, sir, I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 30th of last month, & beg leave to reply to it as far as I can, Yet your proposals are so general that I cannot give a full

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

answer — You say you will repair my mill in the manner We discoursed upon, this manner I forget — was you to provide all the scantling such as arms & shrouding lining or sheeting for the water wheel, or was I to get all these articles sawed & lay them on the ground at the mill?— who was to do all the team work, you or I, if I did it, was you to allow me for it or not, Was I to board you & your hands or not, or was you to allow me for it. It is next to impossible either for you or me to get the scantling & boards for the water-wheel & forebay sawd at this season of the year. these articles should be provided in the winter & spring, it is now quite too late to provide these articles so as to have the mill done this season — Mr Wm Cooper was to have done all these things himself from the first chip to the last for 350 bushels of corn & I was to have nothing to do in the affair until the mill was ready to run. this was but 87½ dolrs for every article of labor & expence & all to be in trade —

There is another circumstance that interferes, if I have any part of the work to provide for myself, after august Court is over I am obliged to go to Vincennes & perhaps I shall not return until winter, that it will not be in my power to do any thing myself. therefore on the whole we must let the matter rest for the present.

8th July 1811.

Sir, Your very humble servt

J C S.

[JOHN CLEVES SYMMES]

TO CAPT. JAMES LOGAN AND MR. JOHN COOPER

[*Short Family Papers*]

To Capt. James Logan, and Mr John Cooper. [1811?]

Gentlemen, I am now ready to receive my corn rent, and I beg that you will deliver the corn that you intend for me to Mr Cunningham who lives in my house at Northbend, and to John Thomson.

You must not dream of withholding any part of the years rent, tho John Thomson says Mr Cooper told him that he could not spare any corn for rent this winter.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

I look to both of you gentlemen for the whole rent, I did not let one half to one and the other half to the other — You are both bound for the whole rent — Duns new ground I do not charge you with — I never did think that it was prudent in either of you to undertake so large a place, and if you will take my advice you will give up the place in the spring, for I do think that neither of you, nor both of you together are equal to the working of so large a place as it ought to be worked — You have not teams, nor man help sufficient to manage the place.

To work the farm properly requires four good men, and two good able teams with good plows & harrows, these you have not got & I fear you cannot get, yet every acre of ground ought to be worked in the best manner when a tenant has rent to pay for his land.

My opinion is that if you stay on the place another year, you will be more behind of your rent than now. And as you both owed me considerably when you went on the place I cannot think of your increasing your debts by keeping back any part of your last years rent, I beg you therefore gentlemen to make arrangements to pay off the whole of last years rent. Capt Logan informed me not long before I came from Northbend, that he would not only pay off his rent this winter, but he would also discharge a great part of his old debts due to me for several years past I am willing to take the place in the spring, if you will both leave it, and I am persuaded, that the longer you stay on the place, the worse off you will be, for the truth is that neither of you understand farming land as it ought to be done. I will buy your wheat on the ground towards your last years rent, this will save you the expence of harvesting & threshing & next years rent of the ground on which the wheat is growing.

At any rate whether you sell me your green wheat or not, I must assuredly have my last years rent for I am determined not to let my rents accumulate from year to year in the most unwise & patient manner in which I have formerly done, and after all my patience many times have I lost the whole debt. I had rather the land should lay Idle, than not to get my rent yearly when due

# MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS

[JOHN CLEVES SYMMES] TO WILLIAM WARD

[*Short Family Papers*]

Cincinnati 23rd October 1813

To Wm Ward Esqr. of Urbana

Dear sir, It is now several years since you paid the amount of my order in favor of Mr. St Clair which is the last money that I have received from you, though my necessities since that time have been great.

I now send my grandson Mr John Cleves Short to you to beg the favor of a little more money if it be possible for you to oblige me with it, for I am in great need of money at this time to pay those I owe, as they want to pay it into the receivers office for land. I will name no particular sum but I beg sir that you will be so good as to pay to my grandson whatever you can, for which he will give you a receipt on this letter.

I am extremely afflicted with an inveterate cancer in my under lip & chin which I expect will shortly take my life. If therefore you can come down & see me Sir. I am willing to compromise our concerns on very reasonable grounds & give up your two bonds to you for much less than what I am intitled to by the tenor of them — The country is now full of money by reason of the war, but I expect the war in this part of the country will soon be over, & money of course will become scarce.

We had much better draw our business to a close while we both live as it is of a nature somewhat intricate & If you cannot pay me at present the whole in money of the sum we may agree on as a final settlement [I] am willing to take your bond in the common form for the balance, & cancel the old ones.

But in the mean time, I beg sir, that you will be pleased to send me some money by my grandson the bearer until you can make it convenient to come down yourself.

with great respect I remain sir Your very humble servant

J C S



PART VI

LETTERS CHIEFLY FROM AND TO ANNA SYMMES  
HARRISON, (MRS. WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON.)

JOHN CLEVES SYMMES TO  
WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON

[*H.P.S.O. Mss.*]

Dr Sir — Mr John Hillier waits on you to propose settling on your lands in the eleventh Range on some terms or other as you can agree — I can recommend him as an honest man — he lived six years a near neighbor to me at this place — If he will go soon you will do well to encourage him — the sooner he & others the better — Dr Sir yours

Sept 9th 1796.

John C Symmes

Capt Harrison

[Addressed:] Capt: Harrison Fort Washington

MARIA SHORT TO ANNA HARRISON

[*Ind. Hist. Soc. Mss.*]

Greenfield [before 1801]

Dear Sister<sup>1</sup>

I feel very anxious to hear how you got home for the weather has been very bad for traveling here the day you left Greenfield I fear you got very weet for their seemed to be very hard rain and Thunder betwen this and Georgetown I felt so uneasy for you and the dear little children that I went to beed and had the headake very bad all the day — Our house appeared so lonesome

<sup>1</sup>This letter, the only one found from Maria Symmes Short, affords an insight into the personality of an affectionate and intensely feminine woman. Cf. Introduction, *ante*, pp. xxiii-xxv.

## CORRESPONDENCE, ANNA SYMMES HARRISON

for some days that I hated to go ought of my Room — I think I feel much worse about our being so far apart then I ever did pray write me a long letter by Mr Short and tell me what kind of a time you had and how the Children is and how poor Charlott makes ought her Mother seems to fear that she will be treated Ill by those you have about the House — I hope she may be a good girl some time sence but at present you must not look for any thing from her for she is almost too young to be look from her Mother. I hope that you found Papa well please to give my love to him — You will have quite a large family while Mr Byrd Dandrige and Mr Short is with you — pray donot give yourself any trouble about things for I think you hardly will have got over the fatigue of rideing down before they will be at Cleaves — let me hear my dear Sister how you like the looks of things their I hope you may be agreabbly dissapointed it is Late at Night — our little girl is cuting two of her teath and has falen away very much since you left greenfield the Boys are well and as bad as ever — Polly joins with them in love to you and the Children — My respects to Mr Harrison Adué

my dear Sister Maria Short

greenfield Sunday Night

[Addressed:] Mrs. Harrison at Cleaves by Mr Short

JANE SHORT<sup>2</sup> TO ANNA HARRISON

[*Ind. Hist. Soc. Mss.*]

Greenfield August 12 1803

I was yesterday made happy my very dear friend by receiveing your letter of July 24th. and evince the pleasure it afforded by this early acknowledgement The assurance of your friendship and affection will be ever dear to me I hope you will write to me frequently your letters have the most pleasing effect upon my spirits and your wish to have me make you a visit is not more ardent than mine But it is is [sic] entirely out of my power I expect to be put to *bed* the last of this *mounth* (a smart woman to be sure

<sup>2</sup>Jane Short, Mrs. Jane Henry Churchill Short, whom Peyton Short married about 1803. Evidently this letter is an answer to one from Mrs. Harrison welcoming the second Mrs. Short into the family circle. Cf. Introduction, *ante*, p. xxiv.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

you *will say*) that circumstance together with the charge of enfamily will for bid my realizeing such a happiness I hope you are quite recovered from your cold together with your sweet children how much I wish to see them kiss them all a thousand times for me and do not let Betsey and Symmes forget me I think S. must look very much like a little man in Jacket and overalls Our children grow extremely fast they are all well and desire their love to yourself their grandmama Uncle and their little cousins— — — Wilst writing the above my dear Nancy your cousin Polly and her sister Mrs Daniel Symmes have arrived and are very well your dear Pah, was in good helth and spirits when they left Cincinati about a week ago he wrote to the little boys and told them on his return from Vincinnes with their Grandmama they would take this place in their way to the Ohio I shall be rejoiced to see them both and I hope Miss Living[s]ton will be with them kiss your good Mama for me tell her I thank her most sincerely for her friendly letter I wish she would write to me every week her letters afford me so much pleasure but she must pardon my not writing by this opportunity as writeing does not agree very well with me But if the man that is to take this does not come as soon as I expect I shall try and write to her Mr Short joins me in best respects to yourself and the Governer with Mama and Miss Livingston kiss the dear children a thousand times for me I remain my dear your friend and Sister

Jane S ———

My sisters Mrs Ridgley and Mrs Wilkins are well with their familyes Adieu

[Addressed:] Mrs. Anna Harrison Vincennes Indiana Territory  
Mr. Bond

(Copy of a letter from Judge Symmes  
to his daughter Mrs. Harrison)

[*Short Family Papers*]

“Cleves 7th. March 1808

My dear and ever loved daughter. It is now several weeks I believe since I wrote to you — I therefore will delay the pleasing task

## CORRESPONDENCE, ANNA SYMMES HARRISON

no longer. I flatter myself, my dear, that the best news I can write you is that I enjoyed remarkable good health the past winter & at present. I can now cart rails, make fences, or get wood from morning until night, & it does not seem to hurt me more than it did twenty years ago. I feel tired at night to be sure, but then I take my tea and go to bed early, and in the morning am generally up as soon as it is light & go directly with my hired men to work again till the horn blows for breakfast — as soon as that is ate, away to work again until the dinner shell again blows. Dinner over, unless company detain me, away we go again to work until after sunset — I find I can yet step over the high hills of North Bend as quick, & generally quicker than any of the young men who work for me though I have many of them for the most part at work for me when I can attend to be with them, for I find that three will do more work in a day when I am with them, than six do in my absence. therefore I am obliged to work. for it is no better than throwing money away to hire men and leave them to themselves. they will not half work. — I forget my love whether I informed you in my last that Capt. Symmes had married the widow of Capt. Lockwood, with six children. Who can account for such unaccountable marriages? Surely none. All your relatives in these parts are in health. the weather is extremely fine. I wish two or three of my little darlings were now with grandpah to go to school, as there is a good school kept in this village.

The Ohio has been higher lately, than it has for fifteen years before, not since March 1793. several fine ships have gone down the river lately. We know not yet whether war or peace will be our lot. I wish for peace, but am ready for war. Almost all Europe are now at war with old England, and while others are fighting, I hope the Americans will be allowed to go on clearing land and making fence as I do from year to year for I would rather kill ten fat beeves in a year than an hundred Englishmen. Please to present my best respects to the Govenor, and my kindest love to all my sweet darlings. Grandpah thinks a great deal of them although he cannot see them, as he wishes to do with all his heart. I fear Col Chambers speeds but ill with his cutting out the new road. his hired men went from NorthBend on the last day of



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

February, and were to meet the first day of March. he ought to have thirty men with him constantly till tis done.

Mr. Short writes to me that his son John sets out for Philadelphia some time in this month to put himself under the patronage of his uncle William,<sup>3</sup> and expects that John will enter Princeton College at the next vacation — John is a tall young man near six feet high, and a very well made handsome fellow. and he has an excellent understanding, and for one of his age has a sound judgment & a very good start in his education. I flatter myself that he will make a very worthy man in his day — but the saying is, that every crow thinks her own young ones the whitest. I pray God that all my Grandsons may prove to be valuable men, & all my Granddaughters, women of the first character for prudence and discretion, and copy after their dear mothers in modesty & industry I must now take leave my love as my paper is out. So good night my dear. John Cleves Symmes.

Mrs. Harrison at Vincennes Indiana territory.”

[written on margin] “10 March. This day is rainy, but warm. The grass begins to spring — Buckeye & weeping willows are leaving out. some have begun to garden. James Mc Clellen had promised to move his family up from the point to Cleves to tend & make my garden. but he now says that he cannot come” — [On another margin] “March 10. Yesterday I received a letter from Capt. Symmes, informing me that he had at last found his rib — he appears by his letter to be much pleased with his wife [and] says she is universally admired by all her acquaintance, and is perfectly military both in her mind & constitution. But now he is distressed for fear of being ordered on some distant service, & in that case, obliged to leave his bride snivelling behind him.

<sup>3</sup>William Short, the well-known diplomat and Jefferson’s protégé, returned to America in 1810, settling in Philadelphia. In contrast to his brother, Peyton, William Short acquired a large fortune by land speculation in Kentucky and northern New York. Eventually he undertook the education of his younger nephew, Charles Wilkins Short. *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. XVII, New York, 1935, p. 129.

# CORRESPONDENCE, ANNA SYMMES HARRISON

ANNA HARRISON TO JOHN CLEVES SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

GrouseLand 10th of July 1808

My dear Nephew

I was extreemly unhappy to hear of the death of your dear Mother, I had been very anxious to hear from her, from the time that your unkle Wilkins told Mr Harrison at his mill that she had been and still was very ill — —

But we must as much as is possible for us, submit to the all wise Creator of things and endeavour to make our selves suitable objects of his care for he has said that to those who love and fear him all things shall be ordered for their good —

I feel extreemly for Mrs Henry she has indeed been made to drink deep very deep of the cup of affliction Oh that she may also be ennable to drink largely also of the cup of consolation

Be pleas'd to present my best respects to her and your poppa also my love to all the children

Tell Charles that he must write to me or to his cousin Symmes I wish also that Mary Churchill<sup>4</sup> would write to Betsey I am fearfull that we shall not be able to see Lexington this season but I hope if I ever live to see another spring that nothing will prevent our long talk'd of Journey.

Betsey received a letter from your Grandpah last week he was very well and said that your Grand Mah Mrs & Mr Deliplane had all set out for N York I suppose she never will return to this country again you must contrive to write often as long as you continue in Kentucky. and as often as you can spare time when you go to PrinceTown for believe me my dear John nothing can give me more pleasure than to hear often from you and your dear Brother and Sisters.

I heard by Mrs Parke that the last Child that your Mah had was a son but as I had never heard any thing of the kind before I think prehaps she had been misinformed I will that you to inform

<sup>4</sup>Mary Churchill, daughter of Mrs. Jane Henry Churchill Short, married her step-brother, Charles Wilkins Short, in 1815.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

me in your next letter wether it is true or not — Papa wrote me some time ago that your Pah talk'd of moveing to Lexington I suppose it would be much better on account of schooling his children

Our children all send their best love to you and all of your Sisters and Brother. Be so good as to present my respects to your Aunts and Unkles —

Write me a long letter soon and inform me of all and every thing that you suppose will be interesting Adieu my dear Nephew and believe me ever your affectionate Aunt —

A Harrison

Mr Short.

[JOHN C. SYMMES HARRISON  
TO JOHN CLEVES SYMMES]

[*Short Family Papers*]

Groucelind February 7, [1811]

My Dear Grandpapa

I have been waiting to receive a Letter from you for several Weeks past but was disappointed. I hope yow will excuse my not writing oftener as I am much engaged with my Lattin Sister Lucy Brother William Scott and my self go every day to school at the Semenary We were muchh Delighted to hear that Cousin John Shorts has nearly Recovered from his sick ness I send this Letter by Mr Randolph who set out last week to attend Court in Harrison from thence he will go to the Courts in the upper Counties Papa will set out day after tomorrow for his Mills and will hand this Letter to him take on to you. Adieu my Dear Grand Papa

I ever remain your affectionate grandson

John C. Symmes Harrison<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup>John Cleves Symmes Harrison, born in 1798, married first, a daughter of General Zebulon Pike, and secondly, Mary Ann McIntyre. He settled across the river from North Bend in Boone County, Kentucky. He died in 1830, and with characteristic open-handed family loyalty, General Harrison assumed the support of his son's wife and her five children. Green, *William Henry Harrison*, p. 486.

# CORRESPONDENCE, ANNA SYMMES HARRISON

[ANNA HARRISON TO JOHN CLEVES SYMMES]

My Dear Father

[Grouseland] February 7 [1811]

I must write you a few lines on the back of Symmes's letter to make one more request and indeed Papa I know not how to take a denial I well remember how very indulgent you ever were to me before I was Married and I cannot help thinking Papa that you now treat me unkindly not to comply with the many requests that I have made for you to visit us at this place This Papa is but a renewal of the same old story it is *this* that you will make up your mind arraigne all your affair's and be quite ready to accompany Mr Wallace in his Boat as far as the Falls or the Red Banks which ever place he gits out at and we will have a horse there ready for you Mr Harrison mentioneid it to him before he left this and he said he would be axtreemly happy in your company he will stop at Cincinnatta if you perfer starting from that place if it is more convenient for you to be at Laurencebourg he has promised Mrs Randolph to take a Trunk on for her from that place — He will be there about the first of aApril if you will write us word wich place you will be at Mr H will inform Mr Wallace of it.

I wish papa you would bring me all your old pictures you have throwing about even if they are at Mrs Silvers [as] she can not think hard that you should send them to me when I want them — My best love to John Short if he is with you poor fellow how distressed I was for a few moments on his account untill Mr H showed me a letter from Mr Wilkins he writes that Mrs W talks of visiting us this spring and intends to bring Anna Maria with her dear girl how much I want to see her Our family are as well as usial except very bad Colds do write me soon

I remain your affectionate Daughter

Mr Harrison and all the Children send a great deal of love



# INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON TO ISAAC SHELBY

[*Ind. Hist. Soc. Mss.*]

Head Quarters Cincinnati

20th March 1814

Dear Governor

I have resisted my inclination to write to you for some time past because it would have interfered with some indispensable duty which has constantly occupied me since my arrival at home — I found my father in law sinking into the grave under an incurable complaint and my desire to get as well acquainted with his affairs as possible occupied all the time I had to spare from public duty.<sup>6</sup>

*Willm Henry Harrison*

[ANNA HARRISON] TO BETSEY [HARRISON SHORT]

[1815]

[*Short Family Papers*]

My dear Betsey<sup>7</sup>

Mrs Buruss is now here on her way to your house, & wishes me to speak a word in her favour. She is extreemly anxious if it is a thing any-way possible, for Mrs [sic] Short to let them stay on his place this summer — She says they can not with any convenience move on their land untill fall — Scott would let them have a house if he had any that was fit for any person to live in. I do think her an industrious woman — & Scott thinks Mr Buruss will be a far better tenant than Bevans, who is a very worthless kind of a man. Our best love Lucreatia is still going about. your affectionate

Mother — A H.

<sup>6</sup>In his will, dated December 31, 1813, Judge Symmes named as his executors, "my worthy son-in-law, William Henry Harrison, Esquire, and my beloved grandson, John Cleves Short, Esquire." *Will Records, Hamilton County*, vol. 136, pp. 46-47. January 31, 1814 he assigned to his executors bonds totalling approximately \$5,000.00, in consideration of an advance of \$2,000.00. *Assignment*, January 31, 1814, *Clarke Mss* (H.P.S.O.), fo. 39.

<sup>7</sup>Betsey Bassett Harrison, born September 29, 1796, the eldest child of William Henry Harrison and Anna Harrison, married her cousin, John Cleves Short, June 29, 1814, and lived at "Short Hill" near North Bend, where she died in 1846. J. Fletcher Brennan, *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 318; Edwin Henderson, *Historical Sketches of Cincinnati*, vol. 4, 1923, H.P.S.O. *Mss.*

## CORRESPONDENCE, ANNA SYMMES HARRISON

ANNA HARRISON TO MRS. PHOEBE R. REEVE

[*Ind. Hist. Soc. Mss.*]

Northbend March 27th 1836

My dear cousen,

A long, very long time has elapsed, since I have received a letter from you. The last was dated the 3d of August — 34. I wrote in answer to it, and have been anxious to recieve a letter for a length of time, but as yet have been disappointed I trust that nothing has happen'd to yourself, or family, that has been the cause of your not writing Our family have been much afflicted with colds this last winter, indeed they have prevail'd all over this western Country — The weather has been very severe with us, & I suppose much more so with you, but I now hope we will have spring weather, altho this day, is the only one we have had. I feel so very anxious to hear from you, or some of my friends, or relations on the Island, that I feel as though I could not patiently wait any longer — So that I hope my dear friend, you will write me as soon as possible, after you receive this — If you should not be able to write yourself, I trust that your Husband, or some of our female friends will — Our married children are all as well as usial, with the exception of our Eldest daughter Betsey Short — who has been very severely afflicted for more than a year, with a complaint wich the Medical Men, call Neuralgia, it is a voilent pain at times, in different parts of the body or limbs — She has been to different places for medical aid, but with very little effect — I trust that her afflictions may be santified to her, & that she may be enabled to say, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good — This letter will be short, as I will write again when I hear from you — Remember me affectionately to your Husband, & all of my relations & friends — I should like to know, wether your Father is still living, & how many brothers, & Sisters you have, indeed any thing, & every thing, that relates to any of my relations, friends, or acquaintance, will be truely gratefing to me, in this far off Country —

Do write soon my dear cousen, & believe me ever truely & affectionately yours —

Mrs Reeve —

A. Harrison

[Addressed:] Mrs Phebe R. Reeve Mattituck Long head New York



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

J[OHN] C[LEVES] S[HORT] TO ANNA HARRISON

[*H.P.S.O. Green Mss.*]

Shorthill. Augt 6th 1845

My dear Aunt — I returned from town last evening and this morning Betsey handed me your letter of the 30th. ult.

I am truly sorry to hear of your pecuniary embarrassment — & also mortified that you should say that you advanced money some 3 or 4 years since, to pay Mr. Laurence of Boston, “at *my* particular request.” Your son Scott<sup>8</sup> said the same thing to me last winter, at which time I repudiated the idea, & beg that, you will do me the justice of disabusing your mind of such an impression.\* The fact is Judge Burnet, one of the securities on Mr. Laurence’s note made the “particular request” — writing to me that it would be “to the credit of all the parties concerned” to pay this money out of the fund advanced to you by Congress — This letter I inclosed to Scott, telling him, in what words I do not recollect (as I keep no copies of my letters) that I was very much of Judge Burnett’s opinion — & that if you saw proper to advance the money you would of course have a right to come on the estate for it again — And I never would have had any thing to do with this estate as an administrator, had I not supposed that long before this time it wd. all have been settled up and every body paid — Such however has not been the case, and the numerous creditors are howling in every direction for their money — while the admrs are held up as miserable if not faithless, managers. I never go to town but what I am stopt in the street by these creditors, and the most formidable of them do not live in town. — I will go on to speak of the estate, and come to a conclusion, which I have no doubt will be agreeable to you — indeed “to all parties concerned” to use Judge Burnet’s words.[\*]

\*Nothing would give me more pain than to induce you to advance money even for the payment of yr. husbands debts which at the time I ought to have known never would be turned to you — I might under some circumstances be induced to beg, and under others to enlist as a common soldier — but to *borrow* money for myself or others without knowing when & how it would be repaid is what I could never do —

<sup>8</sup>John Scott Harrison, son of William Henry Harrison and Anna Harrison, was born in 1804, and lived on his estate “Longview”, later known as “The Point”, at the junction of the Ohio and Miami Rivers. He was the only one of Mrs. Harrison’s sons who lived to a comparatively old age, dying in 1877. His son, Benjamin Harrison, became the twenty-third president of the United States. Green *William Henry Harrison*, p. 487.

## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

I have long been of the opinion that the estate never will be settled up, so long as Scott & myself continue to be the nominal administrators of it — we are in each other's way, & bad as the times have been, I think that if only one of us had been appointed, and had been as attentive to his duties as he ought, a final settlement & winding up of the estate would have been consummated by this time. — More than a year ago I said this much to Judge Este, who discouraged the idea of my resigning, saying in fact [that] the court would not accept of such resignation — I therefore concluded that I was under the necessity of continuing. In speaking to Mr. Hart however on the day before yesterday I am now encouraged to hope differently. Mr. Hart says he never knew an estate settled up as it ought to be where there were two or more admrs — that they frequently do resign — and the court acquiesces where a good cause is shewn — & that in our case, the distance that Scott & myself live apart, is alone sufficient — To settle up such an estate as we have undertaken, we should live in one house — or if not seeing one another everyday at least every week — whereas 3 months, & I believe 6 have sometimes intervened, without your son & myself having a personal converse. — & as for doing such business by correspondence — a yoke of cattle could pull together at the distance of 7 miles apart, better than an affair of this nature can be managed by writing.

I therefore shall with some hope of success, apply to the next court for permission to resign my post — when the business being in your son's hands only will I hope be managed more to your satisfaction and to that of all other persons concerned.

In the mean time, I have in my hands \$[sic] recd. from the Sale we made at Cleves last spring — I have retained it at the request of Mr. Hart, to pay some Dutchman (living now at or near Hamelton) for labor done at the Bend — As he has not come on & I can not go to look for him, I inclose you a check for the amount & you will do me the favor of signing the inclosed receipt & sending it to me by the first opportunity — as without a voucher I cannot settle my act. with the Court — Affectionately & *faithfully*

Yours J.C.S

Mrs. Anna Harrison.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

ANNA HARRISON TO REVEREND WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE

[*Ind. Hist. Soc. Mss.*]

Northbend Sept 22d [18] 45

Revd & dear Sir,

I would have answered your very kind, & friendly letter ere this, but for indisposition, but I feel truly thankful that I can now say, that my health at this time, is as good as usual — I am very sorry, that I am not able, to comply with your request, respecting the Autograph, of my Father in Law Benj Harrison, I have not *one* in my possession — I think, by your applying to Henry Harrison of Birkley, Charles City County Virginia, who is a Great grandson, & lives on the old Homestead — You could procure one — I am extremely obliged to you Sir, for the Books you were so kind, as to send me, Wishing you, & yours, health, & happiness, & every blessing, this world can bestow, & eternal felicity, in the world to come — I will subscribe my self, your much obliged friend, & Sister —

Anna Harrison

Re'd B Sprague — N B. If Sir, you made any other request I will thank you to let me know, As some of my G children were in the Room when I received your letter & after reading it, I have not been able to find it — A H

[Addressed:] William B Sprague D D. pastor of the second Presbyterian Church Albany N Y.

ANNA HARRISON TO MRS. HENRY

[*Ind. Hist. Soc. Mss.*]

Northbend May 12th [18] 46

My very dear Neice —

I shall have to commence my letter, in the usual way, by asking your forgiveness for my seeming neglect, to answer your truly kind, & acceptable letter, *often very often*, have I thought, I will not let another day pass, without writing to my dear Lucy Henry, But Alas time roll'd on, & now, that I am seated, to answer your

kind letter, I find it is almost, the middle of May — We have had a very severe Winter here, & I suppose, it must have been *more so* with you — but my family, together with my children, have all enjoyed usual health, with the exception of Scotts wife, who was for a week or two, extreemly Ill — but has now her health pretty good — I am oblidge to exclaim, Goodness & mercies have followed me, all my days — & I now have a good share of health, for one Seventy years old — But I know my time must be short, in this world, & I do not feel the least anxious, about any thing, that pertains to this life, but some things, I do feel anxious about, it is to live, to see my dear & only son, together with Dr Thornton,<sup>9</sup> brought into the Fold of Christ — God sees not as Man, & perhaps I may not have that happiness granted me, I think I feel, that I am utterly unworthy, of the least of Gods goodness — John Shorts family are well I believe, altho I have not heard from them for some days — Dr Shorts family, have not yet arived, Mrs Mary Short, talks of going East, I believe this summer — Scotts & Mrs Taylors<sup>10</sup> family are well The latter are with me — The last I heard from Susan Graham she was very unwell, her friends began to feel very anxious about her — but your brother, can enform you much better than I can — I have not heard one word, from your Sister Graham, for a length of time, When you write to her, be pleas'd to give my kind love to her, & her family — The last I *did hear* was, that she would go with her Husband to Philadelphia. when he went to attend the Ge'l Assembly — If I should live, untill she returns, it would be extreemly pleasing, to recieve a letter from her — I hope my dear Lucy, you continue to be pleas'd with the place you now are, & that you have by this time, got a *pastor*, I should like very much, to know wether Dr Harrison Scott, lives near you I hope my dear, you will not neglect to write me, as often as you can make it convenient or to Betsey, or Anna, so that I can hear from you & family — You

<sup>9</sup>Dr. John Henry Fitzhugh Thornton, a son-in-law of Mrs. Harrison, was a well-known physicion who, with his wife Mary Symmes Harrison, resided near Cleves. Green, *William Henry Harrison*, p. 488.

<sup>10</sup>Anna Tuthill Harrison, next to the youngest in her family, married her cousin, William Henry Harrison Taylor of Richmond. After his father-in-law's death Mr. Taylor managed Mrs. Harrison's farm at North Bend. Eventually he became State Librarian at Saint Paul, Minnesota. *Ibid.*, p. 489.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

must have heard before this, that your brother Willm has a young son, I do most sincerely wish, it had been a girl — or I think, it would have'd pleased him better, your Aunt Gasaway has gone to Baltimore, went in company with Mr Renyolds, who married Lucy Este<sup>11</sup> — They had been out, on a visit to this Cuntry — My kind regards to Dr Henry, & love & kisses, for all your dear children, Anna Taylor & Mrs Orsato<sup>12</sup> desire their love to yourself — May evry blessing attend you & yours, is the wish, & sincere prayer, of your

ever affectionate Aunt

Anna Harrison.

Mrs. Henry —

ANNA HARRISON TO [JOHN C. SHORT]

[*Short Family Papers*]

My dear Nephew,

I send by the bearer, some Jelly, & hope it will not meet with any accident — I am fearfull it is not very good, as in the country we can not always git what is needfull, to make cooking as good as we could wish — I was truely sorry, to hear you were again so unwell, but hope when the weather gets pleasent, you will regain your usial health — I will thank you, for a few dried Apples, if you have them to spare, Be pleasd to let me know how your health is to day — The family desir to be remembered to you, except my dear Nephew the kindest wishes for your health & happiness of your affect. Aunt —

Anna Harrison

Northbend Jay 30th 47

<sup>11</sup>Lucy Singleton Harrison, daughter of William Henry Harrison and Anna Harrison, married Judge Este of Cincinnati. Their daughter, Lucy Harrison Este, married Joseph Reynolds of Baltimore. *Ibid.*, pp. 486–487.

<sup>12</sup>Mrs. Orsato, a Frenchwoman whom her husband had deserted, appealed to Gen. Harrison for protection, and became housekeeper at North Bend. *Ibid.*, p. 436.

# CORRESPONDENCE, ANNA SYMMES HARRISON

ANNA HARRISON TO [JOHN CLEVES SHORT]

[*Short Family Papers*]

Northbend Feby 18th [18]47

My dear Nephew,

I thank you kindly, for your kind offer to me, & truly, hope, I may never prove unworthy, of the many favours you have, & continue to shower upon me — As to your going to the City on a Sabbath evening, to one who ought to be as careful of health, as I know you ought, I do think, you would not commit any sin by so doing. But if you would rather, go by Land, I do hope you would not hesitate one moment, to send for my Carage, it is small it is true, but two can ride one on each spot, quite comfortable — I would like for Mr Coddle to come, as soon as he thinks it will do, to work on the House — As to any business, I have in the City, I do not at this time, remember any, except a bill I owe to Mr Finkbine, Shoe Maker, brother to the Mr Finkbine at Cleves — It is of quite long standing, but he never call'd for pay, untill lately — I directed Scott, that if he got any money for Sirplus land, when he return'd from Hamelton, to pay him out of the money, that is still due me, from my dear Husbands Estate, but I have not seen him since his return, being confined with pain in his back, & the weather being unpleasant — but he wrote me, that he did not get any money — If it should be perfectly convenient my dear Nephew, to pay this bill, it will be [contributing] another to the very many obligations I owe you — you can get from him a Reciept for the money you pay as Scott has the Bill & I cannot send it — I thank you for your kind present the children in particular. I expect the weather will continue unpleasant for some time & I think you would not do right, to leave home untill *it is pleasant*. The Bill I think, was nearly twenty dols but since, I have had a pair of Shoes for myself, & one do for Mrs Orsato, praying my dear Nephew, that your health may soon be restored, & that you may live to enjoy every Spiritual, & temporal blessing I ever shall remain your affectionate Aunt —

Anna Harrison



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

A[NNA] HARRISON TO J[OHN] [CLEVES] SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Northbend 3d of April 1847

My dear Nephew,

I was truly sorry to find by your last Note, that you were again lay'd by — but hope ere this, you have recovered — I was much pleas'd in a former Note of yours, that you had had, — a conversation with Dr Thornton upon Religion I hope his mind will be more settled, if he reads the Bible & commentaries, with a mind open to convictions. I have for some time, thought the Dr was rather *wavering* in his religious views — I enclose you a letter that I received, from a gentleman liveing in Easton Pa. He wrote me a letter some time last Fall, stateing that he had made a visit to his Father, who lived near the boundery line, between Jersey & Pa, & informed me he pay'd a visit to my dear Mothers grave<sup>13</sup> — He said it was laying quite expos'd, the head & foot stones were standing, the ingraveing on them he copyed, & sent me — it was the same, that I have in a letter written by my Father, He sayed, he felt that he should not be doing right, if he did not inform me — I answered his letter, & desired him, to be so kind as to say, what he thought it would cost, to have an inclosure put around the grave — but as it was gitting late in the season, I thought it better, not to have any thing done untill spring — He mentioned, that I could be informed of his character, & standing in Society, by applying to Mr Brodhead, in Congress, who was a near Relation of his, either his brother or Uncle I have forgotten wich, as I cannot now find the letter — I have been thinking, since I received his last letter, that a *Stone enclosure* would be the most durable, & the cheapest. *If you & your Brother*, would feel willing to pay each ten dols, I will give the same, but if it should not be convenient so to do, I will have a strong Railing, of some durable wood, as I do not feel able to do more than this — *I hope my dear Nephew*, you will not take

<sup>13</sup>Anna Tuthill Symmes, Mrs. Harrison's mother, died July 25, 1776, at Solitude, Judge Symmes' estate in Sussex County, New Jersey. She was buried in the graveyard of Shapanack Dutch Church. *N.J. Historical Society Proceedings*, second series, vol. V, Newark, 1879, p. 23.

## CORRESPONDENCE, ANNA SYMMES HARRISON

my statement amis — I sincerely hope if this fine weather continues you will be able soon, to come & see us, I was quite sick the day when Gorge was here with a severe pain in my side & sholder — but am now much better — I have not as yet, been able to visit our dear Betseys grave, but hope soon to go — I suppose your brother, will soon be with you now — I hope if peyton Breathit comes up he will be able to inliven, some of your lonely hours — for they must be *very many* —

Wishing you my dear Nephew, evry Spiritual & temporal blessings  
your ever affect Aunt

J. C. Short

A Harrison

A[NNA] HARRISON TO J[OHN] C[LEVES] SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Northbend June 2d 1847

My dear Nephew,

I feel anxious to hear some thing respecting your health, as I only hear now, & then, by Gorge & I expect, if he sees you walking about, he thinks you are quite well — Dr Thornton informed me this morning, that you & Dr Breathet, had giveing up, the Idea of buying the Sheep, you thought of doing, sometime ago — We have been Shearing for some days, & I expect will git through, by the last of the week — Scott told me the last time he was here, that I had better, desire you, or the Dr, or both, to come & look at them, & see the Wool, as you could the better; know if they would suit your purpose — But as you have given up the Idea of going into parnership — perhaps, you would like to improve the Sheep you have, If you should wish so to do, I should be pleas'd, to let you have some, say one hundred or less, as you please — You may remember my dear Nephew, that more than a year ago, I borrowed twenty dols of you, thinking at the time, I could in a short time repay it, but it has never since been in my power, If Scott, could make Sale of any Lands, I should take some for myself, as the Estate is in debt to me — but as this appears impossible, I must do as well as I can without it — If you should



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

not want sheep, perhaps a good Cow & Caff, or more than one if you like — or any *other stock* that I have — You have my dear Nephew been so very generous, & kind to me, that words will be inadaquent to express my gratitude to you — I had thought of going up to your house (if health would permit) this week, but hearing, that Dr Shorts family or some of them, would be thare soon, I thought I would put off, my visit untill they came — I am sorry to hear by Gorge, through Mr Taylor, that the Dr is sick, I hope not seriously — I enclose my last letter received from Mr Broadhead — He has put for your Name, *Symmes* — I recieved a letter, about the time of the date of His from a Farmer, I should think from his letters, he wrote me he lived about opposite, the place whare my Mother was buried, had often visited the spot & said, if I wished an enclosure made around the Grave, he would attend to seeing it done with much pleasure, said that in a short time, it would lay quite exposed — I thank'd him kindly, but said, that Mr Brodhead had antisapated his kindness — I think it rather singular, that two persons, should have taken such an interest, in the Grave of an intire stranger —

That health & evry blessing may attend you, my dear Nephew, is the prayer of your oblided & ever affectionate Aunt

A Harrison —

J Cleves Short

[ANNA HARRISON TO JOHN CLEVES SHORT]

[*Short Family Papers*]

Northbend Sept 11th 1847

My very dear Nephew,

I can most cordially simpazise with you, I feel that this Month will bring many, very painful recollections to mind, but we must bow with submizon to the decrees of the Almighty, knowing that all he does is right I know you must be extreemly lonely, I was in hops, that your brother, or some of his family, would have been up ere this, As Anna said you were expecting them, Aand

## CORRESPONDENCE, ANNA SYMMES HARRISON

as I have not been able untill last week to visit you, I thought not so to do, untill they came — I will Name one of our Relations on the IsLand, in case you should take the Island in your way to, or from Boston, I have but one Cousin thare, that I corrispond with; She lives at Mattituck Suffolk county, about twenty five Miles from the point of the Island, She is the daughter of a first cousin of mine — I have one first cousin, but I do not know whareabouts on the Island she lives, Mrs Reeve is the Lady I corrispond with, She has often express'd a wish that some of my Children or Grandchildren would visit her, if they ever should visit, or pass through the Island. I know she would be very much pleas'd to see you, or any of my Relations — We have some living at Hemstead by the same Name; The Railroad passes through Mattituck, She wrote me, that a person could Breakfast in New York & sup in Boston, They Dine while crossing the Sound — I will write to Mrs Reeve next week, & tell her, that she must not be surprised if you call to see her, should you take that in your way I think Mr Short, you could spend a few days very agreeably in the parish of Mattituck, & Acquabough, in the Graveyard of the former, rests the Remains of our Grand Father & Mother Tuthill & in the latter, those of our Grand Father & Mother Cleves. Mr Reeve would accompany you to those places — I have not received a line from Mr Broadhead, since he acknowlidg the receiving the Money. I confess I feel uneasy, but wish to make all the Allowence, as prehaps he is sick or some other thing may have prevented his writing — I wrote to him last week, saying I began to feel uneasy, in not hearing from him. If he should not write soon I shall think he is a Rascal — I am very thankfull to you for takeing the trouble to translate the excellent prayer you sent me — If you should set out on your Journey, before I see you, I trust you will except of my sincere wishes that It may prove beneficial to your health & spirits My sincere prayers is daily offered for you, that all, your afflictions may work out for you, an Eternal weight of Glory. Anna desires her love. God bless you my

dear son & Nephew



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

ANNA HARRISON TO J[OHN] CLEVES SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Nobr 24 1847

My Dear Nephew,

After sending my kindest love I wish you to consent to Dine with us tomorrow the 25th, I do not expect any company, with the exception of Scott, Mrs Thornton & the Dr, Your ever affect Aunt

Anna Harrison

J C Short

A[NNA] HARRISON TO J[OHN] CLEVES SHORT

[*Short Family Papers*]

Northbend May 22d 1848

My dear Nephew —,

I heard yesterday, by Dr Thornton, that you expected to set out for pitsburg tomorrow, & as I have not had, the happiness of seeing you, for such a length of time, I cannot forbear, dropping you a few lines, altho I do not know, if you can read them, my hands are so very unsteady, I expect, they will be as much so, as was my dear Fathers — I should certainly have seen you the day you call'd, altho very unwell, but Mrs Orsato did not let me know, untill you had left — The Animal, that was taken to your Home from the Bend, I hope you will keep, & I feel glad, that I have any thing, that will be of any use to you — Anna Taylor, has been wishing, & talking, of visiting you, but was fearfull, to go in a Carage & could not, leave her babe — I was sorry that I did not see your brother, & his daughters — I often *very often*, think of you, in your loneliness, & wish it was in my power, to do something, that would make you more comfortable. Anna sends her love & best wishes, except of mine, for a continuence of your health, safe Journey, & return — Your ever affect Aunt —

A Harrison

J C Short

CORRESPONDENCE, ANNA SYMMES HARRISON

A[NNA] HARRISON TO J[OHN] CLEVES SHORT

[*H.P.S.O. Green Mss.*]

Northbend July 30th 1848

My dear Nephew,

Some three or four years ago, I advanced the Adminesters of my dear Husbands at your perticular request, the sum of twenty two Hundredth & twenty dollars — with the assurance, that I should be paid, out of the very first sale of Lands — I have struggled on, through difficulties the very best way I could, in order to give the Adminesters, as little embaresment as I could help, in the settlement of the Estate, & have call'd on them but once, for a very small portion of the amount loan'd — I am now forced by necessity, to make another call, The expences of my family are alwayes large, Altho my liveing is always plain, — but in order to carry on my Farming, — I must hier Workmen, & they must have their money, Besids I am compel'd, to have a part of my House new Shingled, or I can not be in any way comfortable, through the coming Winter, should my life be sparied—considering all these circumstances, I do hope, that not any obsticles will be rais'd, against refunding me a small part of the amount loan'd — out of any moneyes the Adminesters may soon receive

your affectionate Aunt —

A Harrison

[Addressed:] J Cleves Short Esqur Shorthill

A[NNA] HARRISON TO [JOHN CLEVES SHORT]

[*Short Family Papers*]

Northbend Nobr 14th 1848

My dear Nephew,

I have sit down to ask a very great favour of you, & I beg that you will not take it amiss — It is, that if you think it proper, & you can do it, without any inconvenience to yourself, to purchase the Land, that is for Sale, lying above this place. It has been offered for Sale, some Months ago, but not one bid was made, &



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

as the Estate of my departed Husband, can not be settled, untill it is sold — I have thought it may duty, to apply to you, But do not my dear Nephew think, I wish you to buy it, unless it meets with your intire approbation — It is of consequence, that the Heirs, should git the *little* that may be left for them, as soon as possible, as many of them, stand in need, some of them, to spend in their Education, others to support their Families — My Father said, to me one day, while my Husband was in the Army (Nancy for he always call me so) I hope Mr Harrison, or yourself, will never be oblided to part with the Northbend property, & ther is one reason, why I feel so badly, at the thought, of its going into the hands of strangers, perhaps a settlement of Dutch. I hope you will come, & eat your Thanksgiving dinner with us, health & wether permiting, its on the 23d of this Month — Wishing you health, & evry blessing, believe me your affect Aunt

A Harrison

### ANNA HARRISON TO HENRY C. ALLEN

[*Ind. Hist. Soc. Mss.*]

Sir,

Northbend Sept 9th 1850

I hasten to comply with your request, altho it is *now* almost impossible to procure an Autograph, I have so often been applyed too for them, — your sincere friend, wishing you health & evry blessing —.

Anna Harrison

Henry C. Allen Esqr —

### ANNA HARRISON TO [JOHN CLEVES SHORT]

[*Short Family Papers*]

My dear Nephew,

Northbend June 23d 1851

I have been in hopes for some weeks past, that my health would have been such, as to enable me, to make you, & Mary<sup>14</sup> a visit but have as yet, been disapointed. I had hoped that this, or next week, I would be able to have realised my wish, but

<sup>14</sup>Mrs. Mary Ann Mitchell Short, second wife of John Cleves Short. Brennan, *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 388.

## CORRESPONDENCE, ANNA SYMMES HARRISON

*now* I believe, I shall not be able, as Mr. & Mrs Deliplaine, are now, on a visit at his Mothers, We shall be oblige to ask them, to spend a day with us, this week, & as we do not know, what day, they will be able to come, it will prevent me, from visiting you this week, & next week the Presbytery is to sit at Cleves, & if I should be from home, it will have the apperience that I went away, that I might not see any of its members should they think fit to call. But if my health, & that of my Family will permit, I hope I will be able to visit Short Hill, week after next — I assure you, that I am very anxious to visit you, & see my dear little Jonny, whom I have never seen but twice. My health is but poor at the best, but much better at some times, than others. My kind love to my dear Mary, with kisses for my little grandson, & ever believe me my dear Nephew yours most sincerely —

Anna Harrison

A[NNA] H[ARRISON] TO J[OHN] CLEVES SHORT

[*H.P.S.O. Green Mss.*]

Northbend August 20th [1851]

My dear Nephew,

You were so good as to say to me when at your House that I must say what you should bring me from the City I thought at the time I would speak to you on the subject before I returned Home But so very unwell for the last days that I did not liked to say any thing respecting it — I am still extreemly unwell but I must say to you that I do not now know of any Articles that I need But if you could feel it convenient to let me have some Money I hope & feel that I should be truely thankfull — My Domesticts must be paid I have two women & one Man and they are more than I can well afford in my circumstances — but I do not know how well to do with less — I assure you that whatever you may send shall be strickly for my own use — I have but very little now due me from my Husbands Estate & that little as far as it will go must go to pay my Taxes — this year and I think this will be the last that I shall have to pay —

with kindest wishes for your health & happiness in this world &  
the next prays your ever affectionate Aunt  
J Cleves Short —

A.H.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

ANNA HARRISON TO J[OHN] CLEVES SHORT

[*H.P.S.O. Green Mss.*]

Northbend Sept 10th [1851]

My dear Nephew,

Will forgive me for not returning him sincere thanks ere this, for his acceptable present but my health has been very feeble, ever since I returned from your House.. Sometimes better, & than worse I feel that my time will *now* be very short, But it is of little consequence old as I am, & have it not in my power to be of any use, to my Friends or others, wishing you & yours, evry blessing for time & more perticularly for Eternity, believe me ever my dear Nephew your devoted Aunt —

Anna Harrison

J Cleves Short Eqr

[Addressed:] J Cleves Short Esqr Short Hill

ANNA HARRISON TO JOHN CLEVES SHORT

[*H.P.S.O. Green Mss.*]

Northbend Decr 31st 1851

My dear Nephew,

You will give me leave to wish you, & my dear Mary, a very happy new Year, & may you both together, with all of the dear little ones, live to see many, very many more, happy ones — As to myself, I look upon it as the last, I ever shall see. Few very few live to see as many as I have, & now only wish to be prepaired, to meet any change whenever I am to change this world for another — I hope it will not be long, before I shall have the happiness of seing you, & dear Mary at my House, as I do not ever expect to be able to go from home — It appears a long time since I have seen either of you — I am always a begging my dear, & now I ask you if you could spare a peice, or two, of old Bacon, or a green Ham — of your first killing, as for my own part, I am not fond of old Bacon, but many think it better than new or Corn'd — My kind love to Mary, & William with many kisses for the dear little ones, May they all long be spared, a blessing to their Parents and to their Cuntry, And that it may be the will

CORRESPONDENCE, ANNA SYMMES HARRISON

of the Almighty to spare you one & all, long very long, is the sincere wish & prayer of your ever affect Aunt —

Anna Harrison

[Addressed:] J Cleves Short Esqr Short Hill

A[NNA] H[ARRISON] TO [JOHN CLEVES SHORT]

[*Short Family Papers*]

Northbend August 29 '54

My dear Nephew,

I feel very sincerely for you, & my dear Mary in the loss of your dear babe. I well remember my feelings at the death of my dear Infant,<sup>15</sup> I thot it was like tearing my heart assunder. To mourn we must, but we must try to be keep from mourning, very dark are the ways of Providence to us, short sighted Mortals — but we know one thing, that watever God does is right altho we cannot often feel it so to be. You have yet left you, two s[w]eet Children — Oh how many parents have lost their all — I remember to have read in some Books, that we must hold all of our blessings with a tremling Hand, but hold fast to the giver, of all of our blessings. If you have pornell's [Pownalls] Hermit, I wish you to read it is very Instructive. I doubt not you have heard of the awful calamity that happend at Louisville.<sup>16</sup> When I first heard of it I was told it was the first Church that had been blown down, & I immiedately thought of your dear brothers Family, Oh, how many things we have that ought to call for our thankfulness. I hope that you & Mary will soon visit us, with the dear Children I am doubtfull if you can read this scrol. I very seldom ever attempt now to write, I have the Rheumatism in my right Arm, with kind love to my dear Mary, & kisses for my dear little ones — Believe me my dear Nephew your ever affect Aunt

A. H.

<sup>15</sup>James Findlay Harrison, youngest child of William Henry and Anna Symmes Harrison, was born in 1817 and died in infancy. Green, *William Henry Harrison*, p. 489.

<sup>16</sup>Sunday, August 27, 1854 a violent storm blew down the new Fourth Presbyterian Church at Louisville, with sixteen killed and twenty-three wounded. There was much damage, too, to warehouses and steamboats. Lewis Collins, *History of Kentucky*, ed. 1874, Covington, Vol. I, p. 73.



# INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

ANNA HARRISON TO J. K. FURLONG

[*Ind. Hist. Soc. Mss.*]

Northbend June 8th [18]55

Sir

I would have answered your letter sooner, but have not yet recovered from a very severe Illness — & have not been able to write, I have it not in my power to send you any, writing of my departed Husband but a Frank I have been so often applied too, for his Autograph, that now, I am not able to do so any longer. When Sir you again see Miss Cheews, be so kind, as to present her my kind love, & altho I am very old, it would give me much pleasure, to receive a letter from her, with information of her Fathers family —

Believe me Sir your sincere Friend

Anna Harrison

Free Willm H. Harrison
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J K. Furlong Esqr.

ANNA HARRISON TO J[OHN] CLEVES SHORT

[*H.P.S.O. Green Mss.*]

Longview<sup>17</sup> April 27th [1860]

My dear Nephew,

Perhaps you will be surpris'd to recieve a Letter from me after not writing to you for a length of time I have often thought of doing so, but writting causes one so much pain, that I have given it up unless I am oblided so to do, I heard the other day, that one of your Sons was sick I hope he has recovered, I think we would have heard, I am compel'd my dear Sir, to ask you to grant

<sup>17</sup>The Harrison homestead at North Bend was burned down about 1859, and Mrs. Harrison made her home thereafter with her son, John Scott Harrison, at "Longview", later known as "Old Point", about five miles below North Bend. She died February 25, 1864.

CORRESPONDENCE, ANNA SYMMES HARRISON

me one more kindness to add to the many that you & your dear Brother have shown me — If you could lend me one Hundreth dollars, untill I can git the Money that is due me from my Husbands Estate you will oblidge me extreemly, but I wish you not so to do, if you cannot do so, without giveing you *too much* trouble, My Son would give it, if he had it in his power but he is at such a great expence in caring on his Farming business *that* together with his Children at School, takes all the Money he can raise from his Farm — My kind love to dear Mary, with love & kisses for the dear Children — Believe me my dear Nephew your affectionate Aunt —

Anna Harrison

J Cleves Short Esqr —

ANNA HARRISON TO JOHN C. SHORT

[O.H.S. Mss.]

Longview Feby 6th [1862]

My dear Nephew,

This is almost the first Letter I have attempted to write since my Sickness my hand is so unsteady that I am fear full you will not be able to read it, perhaps my dear, Mary may. I take this opportunity to sincerely thank you my dear Nephew, for your kind present while I was sick, & for the very many times you have delt so kindly towards me, But it is always the case with Regards whare they are delt kindly with, they are very apt to presume on kindness. This is my case now, if you can with convenice to yourself send me thirty or forty dols I would recieve it with much thankfulness I am oweing some small debts that I wish to pay if I could. Be pleasd to give my kind love to your Wife & all of the dear Children I would be much pleas'd to see you all I wish when you write to your Brother you would give to all of my Relations thare my love & best wishes for their health and happiness and ever believe me my dear Nephew your

sincere & affet Aunt

A. Harrison

J C Short, Esqr





## INDEX

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Academy, Lexington, 8(note 4), 9, 12, 38, 41.<br/> Agriculture, pioneer, 56, 59, 137-138.<br/> Allen, Henry C., 162.<br/> Alley's, 15.<br/> Anderson, Richard Clough, xxx, 107(note 2), 108-110.<br/> Anthony, 57.<br/> Armstrong, Mr., 18, 135.<br/> Austin, 57.</p> <p>Bayard, Col., 98.<br/> Beecher, Philemon, 37.<br/> Bell, Mr., 52.<br/> Bevans, 148.<br/> Bibb, Mr., 130.<br/> Bingle, Deborah, 45.<br/> Biddle, Clement, 109(note 3).<br/> Blackburn, Mr., 15.<br/> Blennerhasset, 130.<br/> Board, David, 91.<br/> Boggs, James, 97, 101, 103-104, 104, 105.<br/> Boggs, John, 78.<br/> Boggs, Robert, 97.<br/> Bond, Mr., 142.<br/> Boudinot, Elias, 75(note 3), 82, 95, 96, 97, 114-123.<br/> Boudinot, Elisha, 76(note 5), 95.<br/> Bouyer &amp; Connolly, 136.<br/> Brearley, Colonel, 107.<br/> Breathet, Dr., 157.<br/> Brian, Mr., 37.<br/> Brodhead, Mr., 156-157, 158, 159.<br/> Brown, Ethan Allen, 128(note 8)-131.<br/> Brown, Captain John, 124.<br/> Brown, Judge, 37.<br/> Budd, Dr., 76.<br/> Burnet, Jacob, 37(note 21), 128, 131, 150.<br/> Burr, 130.<br/> Buruss, Mr. and Mrs., 148.<br/> Bush, Mr., 61.</p> <p>Carpenter, 107.<br/> Caldwell, Robert, 107, 109.</p> | <p>Chambers, Col., 143.<br/> Chapman, Mr., 123.<br/> Charlestown, Mass., 32.<br/> Cheews, Miss, 166.<br/> Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, Letters, comparison with those of John Cleves Symmes, xxii-xxiii, xxix.<br/> Christian, Miss Sally, 108.<br/> Churchill, Mary, 35(note 20), 145(note 4), 153.<br/> Clark, Mrs., 15.<br/> Clarke, Mr., 108.<br/> Clarkson, Gen., 73, 74.<br/> Clay, Mr., 53.<br/> Cleves family, 31, 32-33, 159.<br/> Cleves, John, xvi.<br/> Cleves, Mary, xvi.<br/> Coddle, Mr., 155.<br/> College Township, 128(note 9).<br/> Condict, Silas, 92, 95, 101, 102(note 6)-103.<br/> Condict, Mrs. Silas, 102.<br/> Colerain, 116.<br/> Cooper, Isaac, 48.<br/> Cooper, John, 137-138.<br/> Cooper, Wm., 137.<br/> Cory, Mr., 37.<br/> Counterfeit money, 95, 96-97.<br/> Cox, Jos., 57.<br/> Craig, Capt., 61.<br/> Crane, Mr., 37.<br/> Crane, Stephen, 104.<br/> Creighton, 130.<br/> Crettenton (Crittenden?), Major, 108.<br/> Cummings, John N., 95(note 4).<br/> Cunningham, Mr., 23.<br/> Currency, problems of, 57.</p> <p>Dandridge, Byrd, 141.<br/> Davidson, Mr., 11, 20.<br/> Dayton, Jonathan, 76(note 4), 82, 114.<br/> Delaplane, Joseph, 14(note 10), 18, 23(note 12), 145, 163.<br/> Demoss, Mr., 136.<br/> Dill, Mrs., 64.</p> |
|---|---|



# INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

- Dimon, John, 66, 67-68.  
 Dittart, John, 97.  
 Dobina's, Mrs., 102.  
 Dotry, Daniel, 104.  
 Dudley, Dr. Benjamin, 1(note 1).  
 Droughts, 23.  
 Dunlavy, Judge, 37, 129(note 11), 131.  
  
 Easton, Col., 107.  
 Edgar, Col., 60-61, 62(note 8), 63.  
 Erwin & Co., 136.  
 Este, Judge, 151, 154(note 11).  
 Este, Lucy Harrison, 154(note 11).  
  
 Findlay, General James, xxix, 23, 44, 46, 49, 72, 131(note 12)-134.  
 Finkbine, 155.  
 Fires on the frontier, v, 26(note 14), 60, 80, 166(note 17).  
 Flatbrook estate, 66, 67-68, 78, 82.  
 Flint, 70.  
 Floods, destructive, 29-31, 143.  
 Fort Hamilton, 116, 117.  
 Fort Jefferson, 115, 116, 117.  
 Fort Massac, 61-63.  
 Fort Washington, 55, 77, 82, 99, 101, 115, 140.  
 Foster, Luke, 60, 131.  
 Freeman, Mr., 37, 76.  
 Furlong, J. K., 166.  
  
 Gano, Mr., 23.  
 Gasaway, 154.  
 Gibson, 57.  
 Gilman, Judge, 37.  
 Glover, Elias, 37(note 21).  
 Graham, Mary, 153.  
 Grist-mills, 25, 124-125, 136-137.  
 Griffie, David, 136.  
  
 Halliock family, 31, 33.  
 Hanly, Mr., 18.  
 Harrison, Governor Benjamin of Virginia, xxiii, 77, 98, 152.  
 Harrison, Betsey B. (see Mrs. John Cleves Short).  
 Harrison, Daniel, 99.  
 Harrison, Henry, 152.  
 Harrison, James Findlay, 165(note 15).  
 Harrison, John Cleves Symmes, xxiv, 3, 142, 145, 146(note 5).  
 Harrison, John Scott, 148, 150(note 8)-151, 153, 155, 160, 166(note 17), 167.  
  
 Harrison, Lucy Singleton, 146, 154(note 11).  
 Harrison, William Henry, v, 3, 9, 31, 53, 54, 56, 59, 61(note 6), 64, 65, 66(note 10), 70, 82, 88, 101, 140, 141, 142, 143, 146, 147, 148, 154(note 12), 166; marriage, xxiii, 77, 98, 103; settlement of estate, 150-151.  
 Harrison, Mrs. William Henry (Anna Symmes), v, xviii, xxiii, 3, 5, 9, 20, 25, 27, 31, 46, 48, 73(note 1), 82, 86, 88, 95, 97, 100, 101, 141-142(note 2), 142-144; financial difficulties, xxiv, 150-151, 155, 157-158, 161-162, 163, 166-167; letters, v, vi; marriage, xxiii-xxiv, 77, 98, 103, 146(note 5); personality, xxiii-xxv, 147, 149, 159, 160; religious faith, xxiv, 152, 153, 156, 158, 159, 163, 164, 165.  
 Harrison, William Scott, 146.  
 Hart, Mr., 151.  
 Harvard College, 32.  
 Heighway, Samuel, 126.  
 Hemp, culture of, 57-58, 59-60.  
 Henchman, Dr., 91.  
 Henry, Col. James, xvii, 36, 40(note 23)-41.  
 Henry, Dr. John, 71, 78, 154.  
 Henry, Lucy (Mrs. John?), 152-154.  
 Henry, Mrs., 14(note 10), 15, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 27, 29, 35, 53, 69, 71, 145.  
 Hillier, John, 140.  
 Hodgdon, Samuel, 75(note 2), 99.  
 Holeman, Mr., 8, 9.  
 Holmes & Pemberton, 78.  
 Horsely, Elijah, 57.  
 Horton, Miss, 33.  
 Howell, Capt., 56, 57, 103.  
 Hunt, Abijah, 95(note 3), 96, 97.  
 Hunt, Jesse, 71(note 14), 72.  
  
 Illinois and Mississippi country, 60-61, 62, 100.  
 Imlay, contract with, 107.  
 Incendiary fires, 29, 60, 80, 166(note 17).  
 Innes, Mrs., 108.  
  
 Jay, John, Governor of New York, xxviii, xxxii, 73(note 1), 89, 97, 123-124.  
 Jay, Mrs., 97, 124.  
 Jay's Treaty, xxviii, 100.

# INDEX

- Jefferson, Thomas, xxxii, 125-126.  
 Johnson, Cave, 61.  
 Jones, Col., 129.  
  
 Kanady's Ferry, 59.  
 Kaskaskias River, lands on, 62, 63.  
 Kennet's *Antiquities*, 7(note 3), 9, 13.  
 Ketchel, Aaron, 83, 102.  
 Ketchel, John, 102.  
 Kibby's Trace, 9(note 5).  
 Killgore, Major, 23.  
 Kirker, Governor, 129.  
  
 Lacasange, 108.  
 Larrison, George, 136.  
 Laurence, Mr., 150.  
 Lee, Col., 107.  
 Lee, Governor, 82(note 6).  
 Linn, Mrs., 53.  
 Livingston, Jane (Mrs. Joseph Dela-  
   plane), xxvi, 14(note 10), 15, 17,  
   19, 20, 22, 23(note 12), 69,  
   142, 145, 163.  
 Livingston, Judge, 89.  
 Livingston, Robert, xxxii.  
 Livingston, Gov. William, 73(note 1),  
   106(note 1).  
 Lockwood, Capt., 143.  
 Logan, Capt. John, 137-138.  
 Longworth, Mr., 37, 132.  
 London, William, 106.  
 "Longview," home of John Scott  
   Harrison, 166(note 17).  
 Louisville, storm at, 165(note 10).  
 Ludlow, Israel, 6(note 2), 99, 100,  
   103.  
 Lyons Tavern, 61.  
  
 Mansfield, Mr., 23.  
 Marsh, Daniel, 95.  
 Marshall, Col., 108.  
 Matson, Capt. John, 124-125, 129.  
 Maxwell, Robert, xxx, 136.  
 McClean, Mr., 37.  
 McClellan, 23, 144.  
 McFarling, Judge, 129.  
 McIntyre, Mary Ann (Mrs. John C.  
   S. Harrison), 146(note 5).  
 McMurtry, Mr., 108.  
 McNichol, 70.  
 Meeker, Capt., 52, 92.  
 Meigs, Judge, 69.  
 Mercer, Miss, 98.  
 Miami Purchase, xviii, xxxii.  
 Minessieur, Mr., 22, 130.  
 Mires, Dr. and Mrs., 35.  
  
 Moore, Hugh, 13(note 7), 22, 31,  
   130, 131.  
 Morrel, Dr. Calvin, 76.  
 Morris, Miss Polly, 78, 96, 97, 98.  
 Morris, Judge, 37.  
 Morris, Robert, xxvi(note 14), xxvii;  
   relations with John Cleves Symmes,  
   xxvii-xxviii, 73, 74-76, 77-78,  
   79-80, 80-83, 83-85, 85-87,  
   91(note 1), 91-92, 97-99, 101;  
   Symmes' financial agent, 93-95,  
   95(note 2), 96-97, 99, 100-101,  
   103-104, 104-105.  
 Mulford, Ezekiel, 136.  
  
 New Chillicothe, 115, 116, 117, 118.  
 North, Mr., 30.  
 Northwest Territory, xxx; proposed  
   legal reforms, xxxi, 110-114.  
  
 Oliver, Theos., 99.  
 O'Ferral, Andrew, 38, 41-42.  
 O'Ferral, John, 38(note 22), 42.  
 "Old Point," home of John Scott  
   Harrison, 166(note 17), 167.  
 Orr, Arthur, 136-137.  
 Orsato, Mrs., 154(note 12), 155, 160.  
  
 Parke, Mrs., 145.  
 Patterson, Judge, 97, 98.  
 Patterson, Mr., 58.  
 "Peach Orchard," Symmes' home,  
   15, 54, 55.  
 Peas, Judge, 37.  
 Peterson, Mr., 97.  
 Perry, 70.  
 Philadelphia, epidemic in, 51(note 2).  
 Philips, Col., 107.  
 Piatt, Benjamin, 56(note 4), 57, 58,  
   59.  
 Piatt, Jacob, 56(note 4).  
 Pike, General Zebulon, 146(note 5).  
 Poole, John, 126.  
 Post, Mr., 6.  
 Post Office, problems, 102.  
 Potter, Jo., 53.  
 Price, Mr., 131.  
 Price, Ruth, 20.  
 Prices, agricultural, 9.  
 Princeton (College), 22, 25, 28, 35,  
   36, 37, 40, 41, 144, 145.  
 Putnam, Judge, 37.  
  
 Randolph, Mr., 146.  
 Randolph, Mrs., 147.  
 Read's Tavern, 61.



## INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

- Reeder, Jeremiah, 16(note 11.)  
 Reeve, Mrs. Phebe R., 149, 159.  
 Reeves, David, 92.  
 Rennos family, 26.  
 Reserved Townships, 13, 65-66 (note 10), 70.  
 Reynolds, Joseph, 154(note 11).  
 Ridgely, Dr. Frederick, 6, 33, 34 (note 19), 35, 36, 38, 40, 44, 45, 46.  
 Ridgely, Mrs. Frederick, 6, 142.  
 Ridley, Susan, 101.  
 Ridley, Mrs. (sister of Mrs. Susan Livingston Symmes), xxvi, 73, 74, 80-82, 83-85, 85-87, 98.  
 Rittenhouse, Capt., 25.  
 River trade, 60-62.  
 Rollins, Mr., 23.  
 Ross, Mr., 30.  
 Rosster, Mr., 60.  
 Runyan, Capt., 56.  
 Ryal, 56.
- Sargent, Winthrop, xxxi, xxxii, 110-114.  
 Savage, Richard, 106.  
 Scioto, proposed settlement on, 61(note 7).  
 Scott, Dr. Harrison, 153.  
 Scott, Judge, 37.  
 Sebastian, Judge Benjamin, 14(note 8).  
 Selmon, Dr., 6.  
 Shackelford, John, Jr., 126-127.  
 Shelby, Isaac, 148.  
 Sedgwick, Theodore, 89.  
 Short, Anna Maria, 1(note 1), 3, 5, 9, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 22, 24, 25, 29, 34, 35, 40, 42, 64, 71, 89, 147.  
 Short, Charles Wilkins, xviii, 1-4, 5, 7-8, 8-9, 11, 15-16, 16, 18, 19-20, 22, 24, 25, 27, 27-28, 28-33, 33-35, 35-38, 35(note 20), 38-40, 41-42, 42-44, 45, 46-47, 48-49, 64, 65, 69, 88-90, 145, 153, 158, 167; education, 12-13, 27, 39-40, 42-44, 144(note 3); influence of John Cleves Symmes, xx-xxi, 7-8, 8-9, 12-13.  
 Short, John Cleves, v, xviii, xx-xxi, 1-4, 5-7, 7-8, 8-9, 11, 14, 15-16, 16-18, 18-20, 20-21, 21-22, 22-24, 24-25, 26, 26-27, 28, 34, 35-37, 40-41, 42, 44-45, 46, 50, 64, 65, 69, 83, 89, 90, 136, 139, 144, 145-146, 147, 148(note 7), 153, 154, 155, 156-157, 157-158, 158-159, 160, 162-163, 163-164, 165, 166-167; anti-slavery views, xxix-xxx, 48; education, 12-13, 36-39, 42-43; executor of Gen. Harrison's estate, 150-151, 161-162; influence of John Cleves Symmes, xxi-xxii, and especially 47-49; marriage, xxiv.  
 Short, Mrs. John Cleves (Betsey Bassett Harrison), xxiv, 3, 27, 35, 40, 89, 142, 145, 148(note 7), 149, 152, 153, 157.  
 Short, Mrs. John Cleves (Mary Ann Mitchell), 162(note 14), 163, 164, 165, 167.  
 Short, Peyton, xviii-xix, xxx, 13 (note 7), 18, 50-51, 51-53, 53-54, 54-55, 55-58, 58-61, 62-63, 64-65, 66, 67-68, 69-70, 71-72, 75-76, 78, 87, 88, 141, 142, 144; anti-slavery views, 48(note 24); financial difficulties, 6-7, 43, 65; personality, xix-xx; speculator in land, xix, xx, 22, 33(note 18), 62, 71(note 12), 72; whisky trade, 61(note 6), 62.  
 Short, Mrs. Peyton (Maria Symmes), xxiii, xxx, 50, 51, 51-53, 53, 54, 55, 55-58, 61, 64(note 9), 75, 77-78, 82, 86, 98, 100, 101; personality, xviii, xxx, 140(note 1), 141.  
 Short, Mrs. Peyton (Mrs. Jane [Henry] Churchill), xix, xxiv, 13 (note 7), 14(note 9), 21, 26 (note 15), 64(note 9), 66, 69, 71, 141(note 2), 141-142, 145.  
 Short, William, xviii, xxi, 144(note 3).  
 Silver, Mrs., 147.  
 Smith & Findley, 57.  
 Smith, John W., 57, 60(note 5), 129.  
 Smith, William Peartree, 76, 95, 96, 97.  
 "Solitude," John Cleves Symmes' estate in New Jersey, xvii, 41, 156(note 13).  
 Southold, Long Island, 31, 32.  
 Spencer, Mr., 65.  
 Sprague, Rev. William B., 152.  
 Stall, Dr., 23.  
 Stanley, Mr., 40.  
 St. Clair, Governor Arthur, xxxi, 75, 76, 114(note 7); campaign, xxxi-xxxii, 114-120.  
 St. Clair (Arthur, Jr.), 37, 139.  
 Steward, Mr., 15.  
 Stewart, Archd., 97.

# INDEX

- Stone, Mr., 129, 131.  
 Suydam, Capt., 51.  
 Symmes family, 32.  
 Symmes, Celadon, xxix, 6, 50(note 1), 55.  
 Symmes, Daniel, xxviii, xxix, xxx, 6, 50, 65, 69, 70, 99(note 5), 129 (note 10), 130, 131, 135, 136.  
 Symmes, Mrs. Daniel, 142.  
 Symmes, John Cleves, v(note 1); ancestry, xv, xvi; anti-Federalist, 36-38, 131; anti-slavery views, xxix-xxx, 39; as a businessman, xxxi, 134-135, 137-138, 139; as a colonizer, xvii, 74; as a farmer, xxxi, 56-57, 59; books in his library, xxviii, 93-94; clerical assistance needed, 79; criticism of legal structure in territory, 110-114; devotion to grandchildren, xx, 25, 33-34, 42-44, 64; education, xvi, xx, xxi; family affection, xviii, xxix, 31-33, 54-55, 100, 103-104, 146, 148(note 6); financial difficulties, xxx, 73-74, 74-76, 83-85, 135, 136; founder of the Miami Purchase, xviii, xxxii; home at North Bend, xxv-xxvi, 54, 75, 77, 79, 97; Indians, relations with, 96, 100; interest in current affairs, xxviii, 100, 107, 129-131, 143; interest in geography, 16-17; knowledge of classics, 6, 7-8, 11, 12-13, 52; letters, v, xv; letters to grandsons, comparison with letters of Lord Chesterfield, xxii, xxiii, literary quality, xxi-xxii; versatility, xx-xxi; marriages, xvii; Morris, Robert, friendship with, xxvi-xxviii; official travels, 75, 76, 92, 95, 112-113; on daily conduct, 2-3, 4-5, 10, 16, 19-20, 43-44; on games, 20-21; ownership of soil, basic theory, 52(note 3); practical, xxx, 125-126; practical farmer, xxx, 23-24, 25, 28, 56-57, 59, 69, 109-110, 124-125, 143; proposed legal reforms, xxxi, 110-114; relations with William Henry Harrison, xxiii-xxiv, 147, 148(note 6); Revolutionary record, xvii, 106(note 1); St. Clair's campaign, xxxi, 114 (note 6)-120, 123; sense of justice, xxix-xxxii, 131-134; suggestions for Indian campaign, 120-122; trade in whisky, xxxi, 56, 61(note 6), 63, 126-128; vs. Peyton Short, xix; vs. Susan Livingston Symmes, xxvi, xxvii, 73-87; views on education, 2, 6, 8, 13, 28, 36-38.  
 Symmes, John Cleves, Jr., xxix, 35, 58, 71(note 13), 143, 144.  
 Symmes, Mrs. John Cleves (Anna Tuthill), xvii, 156-157(note 13), 158.  
 Symmes, Mrs. John Cleves (Mary [Henry] Halsey), xvii, 13(note 7), 14(note 9).  
 Symmes, Mrs. John Cleves (Susan [Susanna] Livingston), xvii, xix, xxvi, 3, 5, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 22, 53, 54, 64, 69, 71, 73(note 1), 75, 77, 78, 79, 88-90, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 101, 102, 124, 140, 145; financial difficulties with John Cleves Symmes, xxvi, 73-74, 74-75, 80-82, 83-85, 85-87; personality, xxv-xxvi.  
 Symmes, Julia, 16(note 11), 18, 47.  
 Symmes, Peyton Short, xxix, 3, 5, 8, 10(note 6), 16, 18, 19-20, 22, 24, 69.  
 Symmes, Polly (Mary), 5, 6, 9, 11, 13(note 7), 16, 22, 52, 58, 66, 142.  
 Symmes Corner, 50(note 1).  
 Symmes, Rev. Timothy, xv, xvi.  
 Symmes, Mrs. Timothy (Mary Cleves), xvi.  
 Symmes, Timothy, brother of John Cleves Symmes, xvi, xxviii, 6, 10(note 6), 16(note 11), 50(note 1), 52.  
 Symmes, Timothy, son of Timothy, xxix, 6, 8, 18, 31.  
 Symmes, William, xxix, 3, 55.  
 Symmes, Rev. Zechariah, xv, 32 (note 17).  
 Taylor, William Henry Harrison, 153(note 10), 158.  
 Taylor, Mrs. William H. H. (Anna Tuthill Harrison), 153(note 10), 154, 160.  
 "Theatre," the new, 23(note 13).  
 Thespians, 23(note 13).  
 Thomas, Richard S., 129, 131.  
 Thomson, John, 137.  
 Thornton, Dr. John Henry Fitzhugh, 153(note 9), 156, 157, 160.  
 Thornton, Mrs. (Mary Symmes Harrison), 153(note 9), 160.



# INTIMATE SYMMES LETTERS

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|--|--|
| <p>Thuston, Mordacai, 45.<br/> Tiffin, Governor, 130.<br/> Tiffin, Mr., 130.<br/> Todd, Judge, 37.<br/> Totten, Mr., 23.<br/> Transylvania University, 8(note 4).<br/> Transportation, problems of, 15,<br/> 29-31, 63, 75, 102, 111, 112.<br/> Turner, George, 110(note 5)-114;<br/> criticism of legal structure of terri-<br/> tory, xxxi, 110-114.<br/> Tuthill, Mr. and Mrs. Henry, xxiii.<br/> Tuthill family, 159.<br/> Tyler, Samuel, 75, 99.</p> <p>Vanblaricum, Garret, 29.<br/> Vattier, Chas., xxix, 23(note 13),<br/> 131(note 12)-134.</p> <p>Wade, David E., 37, 136.<br/> Wallace, Mr., 147.<br/> Ward, Wm., 139.<br/> Washington, George, 106.<br/> Watts, Mrs. 89.</p> | <p>Wayne, Gen., 96, 98.<br/> Wheelan and Miller, 76, 99.<br/> Wheeler, Capt. Aquila, 131, 132.<br/> Whisky, receipts for changing, 126-<br/> 128.<br/> Whisky Rebellion, xxviii, 97.<br/> Whisky, trade in, 56, 57, 60-61<br/> (note 6), 62-63.<br/> White, Capt. Jacob, 56, 65, 70, 72.<br/> White, Mr., 15.<br/> Wilderness Road, 109(note 4).<br/> Wilkins, Charles W., 34(note 19),<br/> 35, 36, 40, 44, 46.<br/> Wilkins, Mrs. Chas. W., 142, 147.<br/> Wilkins, Jno. &amp; Chr. &amp; Co., 99.<br/> Wilkinson, Gen. James, xix, 109<br/> (note 3).<br/> Wilkinson, Mrs. James, 98, 109<br/> (note 3).<br/> Williams, Joel, 65.<br/> Wilson, Catharine, 35.<br/> Wood, Dr., 129.<br/> Woodruff, 70.<br/> Worthington, Thos., 131.</p> |
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